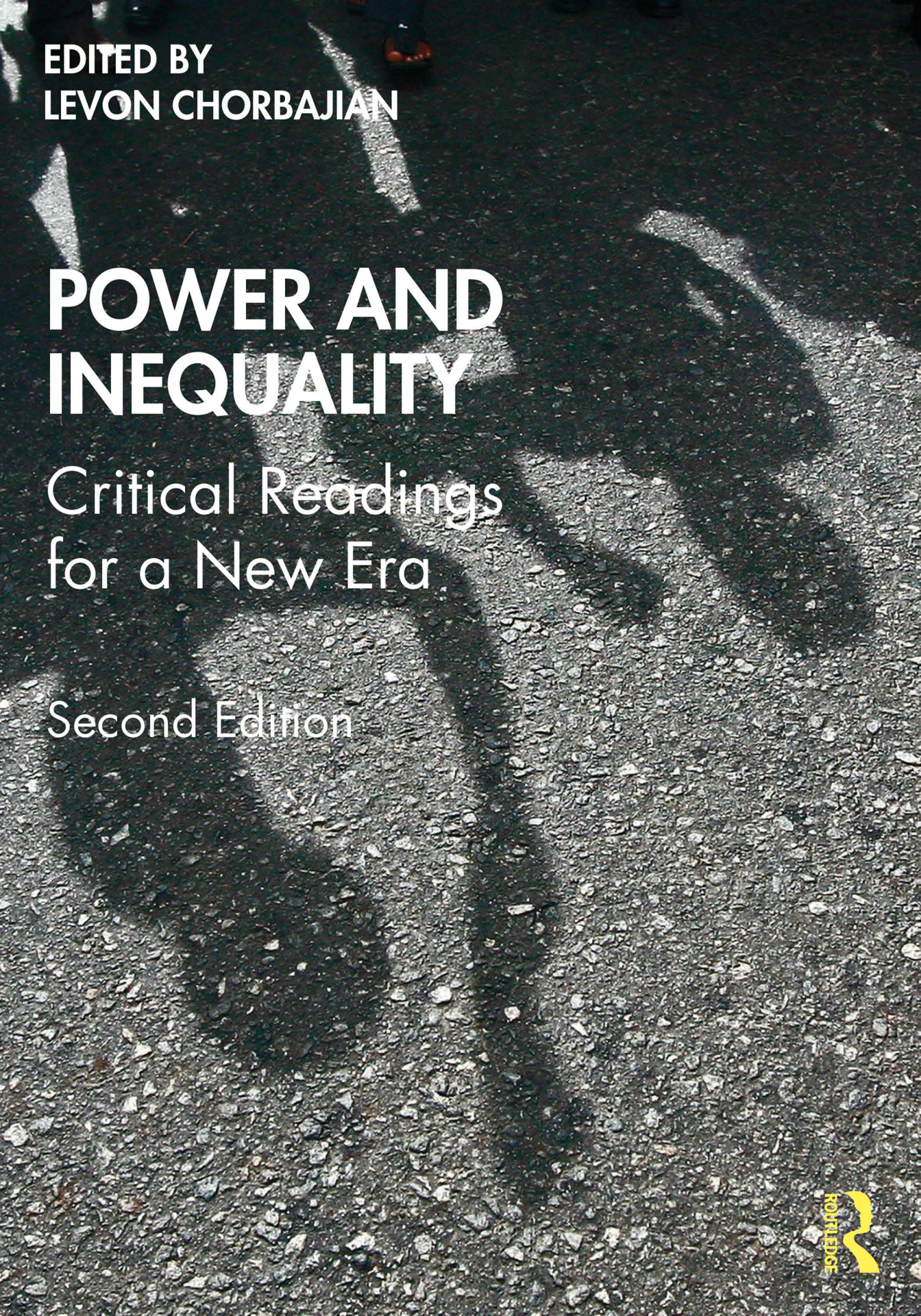
EDITED BY
LEVON CHORBAJIAN
POWER AND INEQUALITY
Critical Readings for a New Era
Second Edition
ROUTLEDGE

Power and Inequality

Successfully bringing together accessible readings that cover the broad range of issues of importance to those studying politics and society, this new edition of *Power and Inequality* provides a unique mix of theoretical and empirical pieces, such as state and electoral politics, that address both classic issues in political sociology and more recent developments, such as globalization. With strong integration of race and gender throughout, this collection offers a coherent analysis of power that reflects the contributions of a variety of critical perspectives, including Marxism, feminism, critical race theory, postmodernism, and power structure theory.

Levon Chorbajian is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. He is a two-time Fulbright Senior lecturer in the Republic of Armenia and the Soviet Union. His research interests center around political sociology and comparative genocide studies, with an emphasis on the Armenian Genocide. Key concepts for Chorbajian are class, power, and inequality. He has written, translated, and edited seven books including, *The Caucasian Knot*, *Armenia in Crisis*, *The Making of Nagorno-Karabakh*, *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, and *Power: A Critical Reader*.

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Second Edition

Edited by Levon Chorbajian

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Preface

I draw on 50 years of experience as a teacher, researcher, and writer in editing this volume. The topic "political sociology" is a branch of sociology whose focus is on power relations in society and their effect on the distribution of scarce resources in society. These resources include income and wealth, which in turn determine people's access to housing, education, employment, nourishment, health care, transportation, and communication, as well as economic security and a more general sense of well-being.

Common sense tells us that there are great inequalities in the distribution of these goods.

Collectively, people in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand (the advanced industrial states) have much more than persons in the Third World. At the same time, within any given country, whether rich or poor, there are further great inequalities between haves and have-nots. If we look at the world's richest economy, the United States, and examine poverty rates, we find that around 15% of the population lives in poverty by federal government standards. Conversely, some people even in poor nations command many resources and live exceedingly well while hundreds of millions live near or below the edge of survival.

It is when we ask why these conditions exist that common sense fails us. Popular common-sense notions include human nature, fate, God's will, claims of overpopulation, and allegations of different levels of intelligence and motivation among societal groups. The problem with these kinds of explanations is that they are not based on the application of scientific principles. Some such as fate are purely mystical, while others on levels of intelligence and motivation come wrapped in a pseudo-science of conservative racial and gender agendas. Common-sense explanations operate as closed-loop systems. Important analytical questions that need to be asked are never posed. Such questions include:

- How do government policies lead to higher or lower rates of poverty?
- What is the connection between great individual and family wealth and the exercise of political power?
- What kinds of ideas and information dominate the educational systems of the society?
- How do class, race, and gender oppression come about, and what role have they played in the political systems of the past five hundred years?
- What kinds of variations are found in the political parties and party platforms of the advanced industrial nations, and what impact do these differences have on the conditions of life for the residents of these nations?
- What effect do large international corporations and international trade associations (World Trade Organization) have on global development and living standards? And what of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund?

- What are the objectives of an interventionist U.S. foreign policy? Who are the winners and losers?
- How and under what conditions have people been able to come together to challenge existing political and economic arrangements, and what have been the outcomes of such struggles?

The preliminary material and seven sections of this book cover many of the main issues of political sociology, and they shed much light on the questions posed here. At the same time, it remains true that political sociology covers a vast terrain, and no text can cover all of this material to everyone's satisfaction. For this reason *Power and Inequality: Critical Readings for a New Era* serves as a versatile text. Instructors who are satisfied with the coverage of the issues can use it as a stand-alone text reader. Others may combine this book with an authored political sociology text or one or more monographs on topics of particular interest to them. *Power and Inequality* easily lends itself to these options. The book also has features that are special, if not necessarily unique. Let's take a look at them. First, a few words about the word "critical" in the title. Critical is not intended to mean negative and should not be understood in that sense. It refers to a broad range of approaches to the study of society that focus on the historic and structural foundations of power and the social institutions through which power is exercised. For the past 10,000 years, going back to the beginnings of civilization, these social arrangements have conveyed privilege to certain social classes, races, genders, and ethic, linguistic, and racial groups over others. These arrangements have been challenged in a wide variety of ways, ranging from small-scale micro-resistance in the form of careless and indifferent work to organized and sustained rebellion and revolution. Power, in other words, is a tension-ridden and sometimes fragile phenomenon. It is never absolute and always subject to challenge. Critical theories, each in its own way, examine and bring out into the open conditions of exploitation and oppression and modes of resistance. The selections in this book do not represent a single critical theory but a set of theories that represent this larger perspective called "critical." These perspectives include Marxism, elite theory, critical race theory, feminism, and post-modernism.

Second, although neither edition of this book is a reader in class, race, and gender, all three stand as major lines of political and economic cleavage and domains of social tension and struggle. For that reason, there are many readings incorporating these dimensions in the various sections. They could have been brought together in a class, race, and gender section, but instead they have been placed in the broader issue sections of the text. The reasoning behind that decision is that the conditions and struggles of these groups are intimately woven into the political and social fabric of the entire society, and so the preferred option was for a format that most closely approximated this reality.

Third, there is a great deal of emphasis on the global and international nature of power. Since the expansion of Europe and its conquest of Third World areas beginning in the 15th century, the world has been an increasingly global one defined by the voluntary and involuntary movement of people, raw materials, products, services, and cultures across its regions. Through the linkage of distant parts of the world through air travel and telecommunications, new levels of political and economic consolidation characterize contemporary capitalism. In addition to offering a section on the nation-state and the global economy, this volume offers reading on revolution, war, genocide, and repression, as well as anti-globalization social movements. It is essential to understand the global foundations of power, and these matters are examined from several different directions.

This volume also features a section on the mass media. Most political sociologists have failed to consider the mainstream mass media as a highly politicized institution, and as a

result political sociology texts and readers that address the media are rare. The reasoning behind including a media section is that there are now unprecedented levels of consolidation and control of the media by giant corporations, and less independence and diversity in the media than in the past. The dependence of the vast majority of the U.S. population on this media for domestic and international news has made the media an institution of critical political import. Section IV, Media and Ideology, recognizes and addresses this issue.

Throughout, this book asks the big questions and attempts to answer them by providing theoretical foundations and historical backdrop along with empirical studies of areas of public concern.

Introduction

What Is This Book About?

Until the late eighteenth century, residents of territories were at the mercy of those who ruled them, and people's options were limited. They could try to win the favor of their rulers, they could go about their business and try not to call attention to themselves, if conditions seemed favorable they could organize and participate in rebellions against entrenched power, or they could hide or flee to other lands. What they could not do was have a say in choosing who ruled them. Nor could they claim legally based rights to freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion that are now the cornerstones of political life in advanced industrial nations. And they could not claim economic rights that are still not well established in a country like the United States—rights to employment, shelter, education, health care, and labor union organization and union protections. (Yates 1999, U.N. General Assembly, 1948)

The American Revolution and the ratification of the Constitution provided important rights for people to choose their leaders. Nevertheless, the majority of people were left out of the new "democracy." There was no democracy for slaves, Native Americans, women, and white men who were not property owners—in other words, a large majority of the people were excluded. This is because democracy and property are always in tension. Those with property—in other words, those with control over the productive resources of society—try to use the wealth that their property conveys to create power for themselves and to use that power to preserve and extend their privileges. This comes at the expense of others who are kept powerless and without a say in how society is run, what its priorities are, and how society's resources are allocated and used.

Howard Zinn's best-selling history of the United States, *A People's History of the United States* (Zinn 2003), is about the many struggles of working people to extend democracy through the destruction of slavery, the extension of voting rights to women and lower income white men, the creation of a better life for European immigrants, the dismantling of legalized segregation and disenfranchisement that were in place as late as the 1960s (and are now being brought back), the protests to bring the Vietnam War to an end, and many similar struggles in areas of the environment, occupational safety, workers' rights, and current seemingly endless wars. In each instance there has been intense opposition from those who benefited from existing arrangements. These were slave owners, the Robber Barons, and the giant corporations that now dominate national and global economic arrangements. This book examines these themes. It is about power and how it is used to frustrate the democratic aspirations of millions and how that power is challenged to create a fairer and just (we would say democratic) society.

Some Background

Despite the value U.S. culture places on democracy, democracy has been perceived as a threat by dominant social forces since the country's earliest years (Zinn 2003; Parenti 2000). For many, if not most, of the delegates at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the ownership of property was equated with the right and ability to govern. This should not be surprising since, as historian Charles Beard pointed out, of the 55 delegates to the Convention, 14 were major land speculators, 15 were slave owners, 24 were owners of public securities, and 11 owned manufacturing, shipping, or mercantile interests (Beard 1935: 73–151). John Jay (New York), coauthor of the *Federalist Papers* and the first chief justice of the Supreme Court, declared, "the people who own the country ought to govern it." Elbridge Gerry (Massachusetts) claimed, "the evils of experience flow from the excess of democracy," while John Dickinson (Delaware) spoke of "the dangerous influence of those multitudes without property and without principle." Roger Sherman (Connecticut) stated, "the people should have as little to do as may be about the Government." James McHenry (Maryland) saw democracy as "confusion and licentiousness," and Edmund Randolph (Virginia) referred to "the turbulence and follies of democracy." Alexander Hamilton (New York), like John Jay a coauthor of the *Federalist Papers,* explained that

> All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The First are rich and well-born, the other the mass of people. . . . The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give therefore to the first class a distinct permanent share of government.
>
> (Beard 1935: 189–216)

In this context, the Constitution's separation of powers, its provision for indirect election of senators (by state legislatures) and presidents (by the Electoral College), and other articles reflect not some abstract commitment to limit the potentially tyrannical power of government, but a very special concern that popular participation in politics, which might threaten the interests of "the few," be constrained (Parenti 2011).

The Framers, no doubt influenced by Plato's description of "the people" as a "large and powerful animal" governed by impulse, emotion, and prejudice rather than reason, equated democracy with mob rule. In more contemporary versions of this argument, fear of mob rule is replaced by fear of the "masses." Today, democracy is recognized as a core value in advanced industrial societies, but only by defining democracy so that it no longer carries the participatory (and, to established elites, potentially threatening) implications of "rule by the people." Democracy now refers to the more circumscribed periodic, competitive selection by citizens of political representatives (Held 1987). Still, a concern that "the people" might demand greater involvement in and control over politics has been a staple of contemporary political theory. Joseph Schumpeter, for example, saw any further participation by citizens beyond voting as political back-seat driving: "the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way that we would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again" (Schumpeter 1976: 262). Robert Dahl, whose writings on pluralism have had great influence in political science as well as political sociology, saw the people as "restless and immoderate." For Dahl, a "tyranny of the majority" could be avoided by political competition between various group interests (Dahl 1956). Seymour Martin Lipset, with his concept of "working class authoritarianism," argued that

the working class was that class most likely to possess antidemocratic, intolerant attitudes and the least likely to possess the civic orientations Lipset deemed necessary for a pluralist system to work (Lipset 1963). This understanding of democracy is perhaps best represented by a 1975 report by the Trilateral Commission (an organization of academics, corporate executives, and state managers from the United States, Western Europe, and Japan) entitled *The Crisis of Democracy* (Crozier, Huntington, and Watanuki 1975). In this report, the political scientist Samuel Huntington argued that the civil rights, women's, antiwar, environmental, and other social movements that emerged during the 1960s threatened "the governability of democracy" by raising excessive demands on the system: "some of the problems of governance in the United States today stem from an excess of democracy. . . . Needed instead is a greater degree of moderation in democracy" (113). In referring to "the democratic distemper," Huntington suggested that "too much" democracy is dysfunctional.

If one accepts as a given the current distribution of resources in society, then it is easy to see democracy as a threat to stability and order. As we have seen, United States' history can be understood as a series of attempts by people, who at various times and for various reasons were excluded from or marginalized by the political process, to make real the promise of democracy. Every advance in democracy and equality in history has been the result of conflict, of mobilization by marginalized, oppressed, and exploited social groups that challenged the legitimacy of existing social institutions.

In their most radical form, labor, feminist, antiracist, and other social movements have all rejected the separation of the political from the social that is characteristic of modern society. Citizens are formally equal in the political sphere (each citizen has one vote, and no citizen's vote counts more than another's), but as individuals in civil society, they are characterized by class, racial, gender, and other forms of inequality. This distinction is problematic for two reasons. First, social inequality creates barriers to meaningful political participation by citizens who occupy subordinate social statuses. To the extent that money is an essential resource for electoral campaigns, for example, class inequality provides wealthy individuals and corporations with a means of political participation that is not available to most citizens. Second, political power is a major means of maintaining social inequality. The state not only engages in repression of critical social movements, it helps to construct commonsense ways of looking at the world that legitimize inequality. In response, social movements have sought to socialize politics by seeking to create and (re) distribute the social resources necessary for meaningful participation in politics. This perspective recognizes that citizenship (in the sense of being an active, participating member of a polity) is not defined by law, but rather is constructed socially. At the same time, these movements have sought to politicize society by seeking to extend democracy to the economy, education, popular culture, mass media, and other social institutions. From this perspective, politics is not restricted to government or public policy; *all* social activity is necessarily political.

These ideas were articulated by C. Wright Mills in his book *The Sociological Imagination,* where he argued that the purpose of sociology is to help develop "publics" (Mills 1959). By this Mills meant active, engaged citizens who see their personal troubles as public issues, as the product of social institutions in a particular period of history. With this understanding, people are able to see how their lives are shaped by social forces and, just as importantly, how social institutions can be changed and new ones created. We could not agree more with this, and believe that Mills's point is especially relevant for political sociology. Without publics, democracy becomes formalized at best; at worst, democracy becomes hollow and fragile. By examining the structural limits to and opportunities for extending democracy, political

sociology provides invaluable tools to help us understand how to create and maintain publics.

What Is Political Sociology and Where Does It Come From?

Political sociology is the branch of sociology that deals most clearly with power in society and its effects on the allocation of major resources. These resources include education, employment, housing, health care, food, and physical and psychological well-being. The breadth of these resources reveals the very broad definition of politics used by political sociologists. Politics is defined here as any activity that concerns the distribution of rights, responsibilities, or resources, and as such, political activity is not restricted to social arenas that are explicitly defined as political (i.e., the state). Rather, political activity is characteristic of all social institutions. At the same time, political activity has been the principal means by which people have responded to social injustices and sought to change or, more fundamentally, transform social institutions. With its focus on power and the possibilities for social change, political sociology is at the very core of the sociological perspective.

Political sociology, as well as much modern intellectual inquiry, grew out of the massive social changes dating back to the sixteenth century, such as the Protestant Reformation, the rise of modern science, and the origins of modern capitalism. The declining influence of religion caused mystical modes of thought to be slowly superseded by secular ones. The European Enlightenment represented the beginnings of modern Western thought and contributed to the weakening of religious definitions of the social world. The French Revolution swept away both the power of the Catholic Church and altered many social arrangements both in France and throughout Europe, to which the ideas of the revolution spread from 1789 to 1815 (Lefebvre 1947; Mathiez 1929; Thompson 1963). These changes represented the final death blow to European feudalism and the rise of capitalism as a political economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and profit based on wage labor as well as the secondary processes of industrialization, urbanization, and global expansion into areas now known as the Third World.[1]

Thus, the short answer to this question is that political sociology developed amid and in response to the rise of capitalism as a political-economic system. After centuries of social conflict and change, capitalism took on its broad outlines in the early nineteenth century. European feudalism was conclusively defeated. Bourgeois elites took control of the political institutions of the emerging and coalescing nation-states of Europe, and the economic exploitation and immiseration of the European working classes and Third World peoples were evolving toward modern wage labor forms.

This was an enormously disruptive process that took place over the course of several centuries. Beginning at the dawn of the sixteenth century, Third World areas were conquered and colonized. Many people were subjected to genocide at the hands of European colonial powers. Millions of others were enslaved—either transported and enslaved elsewhere as in the case of Africans brought to the Western Hemisphere or effectively enslaved on site (Chomsky 1993; Huberman 1936; Rodney 1974). The thirst for profit that could never be quenched required physical labor to exploit resources, and this effort was provided by laborers mining minerals, harvesting timber, planting crops, and constructing the infrastructure necessary to the colonial enterprise (Williams 1966).

Within industrial societies themselves there was a similar process of creating wage laborers out of former rural dwellers who had provided for themselves in subsistence or limited market economies. These people were driven off the land by making it exceedingly difficult to continue to live there. In England, this was done by passing vagrancy laws that made it

unlawful not to be employed and Enclosure Acts that closed off lands known as common lands. These were village lands that had been traditionally used by villagers to hunt, fish, gather food, and graze animals. Closing off these lands and imposing draconian punishments such as long prison terms, exile, or even death made life impossible for many people and forced them to pick up and move, which is exactly what these laws intended. In their new locales, these people took up jobs in mines, factories, transportation, and other industries. In other words, former peasants became what Marx and Engels called the proletariat (or wage laborers) of the new industrial capitalist system (Thompson 1963; Huberman 1936).

Both locales of emergent nineteenth-century capitalism, the industrial capitalist states and their colonized areas of the Third World, became centers of resistance. England, in the early nineteenth century, was wracked by demonstrations, food riots, industrial sabotage, and struggles for political rights (Thompson 1963). In 1871, protests in France culminated in the Paris Commune, the largest spontaneous urban rebellion in modern Western history (Marx 1962). The people took over the city and held it for ten weeks until subdued by government military forces. Indeed, the history of industrial capitalist states, including the United States, is punctuated by class tensions rooted in the exploitation of labor and expressed as worker resistance, and corporate and governmental repression (Zinn 2003). The forms of resistance and repression have varied widely. Individualistic responses have included indifferent work habits, absenteeism, labor turnover, and sabotage of the workplace. On the collective side, workers have engaged in rallies, demonstrations, marches, strikes, and general strikes, and they have formed labor unions, labor, socialist, and communist political parties, and reformist and revolutionary movements.

The reform movements have generally been more successful than the revolutionary ones, but the two have operated in dynamic interaction wherein the more militant and revolutionary movements have created political space in which the more reformist movements have been able to achieve a measure of success. Among these reforms in the advanced industrial capitalist countries have been recognition of the right to unionize and to strike, and winning the right to vote, the eight-hour workday, government-sponsored pension plans, regulation of corporate activities, overtime pay, and the elimination of legalized segregation. The social welfare reforms have been more generous, far-reaching, and beneficial to the working class in Canada and Europe than they have been in the United States, but there has been some success in the United States as well.

The first successful modern anticolonial struggle was the American Revolution fought against British imperialism. It was soon followed by the revolution in Haiti and then by struggles throughout Central and South America. Anticolonial struggles, nationalist and revolutionary, came later to Asia and Africa, in the twentieth century. By that time, the United States had become a world power, the preeminent one after 1945, and had assumed a counterrevolutionary role that it acted out in China, Korea, Chile, Cuba, Vietnam, Lebanon, Iraq, and many other locales (Parenti 1989; Blum 1985).

Why Is Political Sociology Relevant Today?

Today we find ourselves in another period of transition and turmoil created by new strategies for extracting profit for the large corporations that now dominate the world's economy. Three interrelated processes define this extraction. The target of the first is roughly 80 percent of the U.S. population that has seen its level of income, share of national wealth, educational opportunity, and economic security slowly, but steadily, drop since the early 1970s (Mishel, Bernstein, and Bushey 2003; Keister 2000; Wolff 2017). The second is that the globalization process accelerates the extraction of profits from the Third World by using those regions not

only in the traditional sense of supplying markets, cheap raw materials, and cheap labor for extractive industries and plantation labor, but increasingly for manufacturing and professional service jobs. Initially this export of jobs from advanced industrial nations to the Third World and then China was for low-level and semi-skilled jobs, but it has increasingly included skilled manufacturing and even professional work. The third process has been one of increased militarization and aggressive intervention in the affairs of other nations. This includes wars, police actions, and invasions as well as covert political interventions. The pacification of the world's governments and peoples for corporate profit is the main objective (ideologically couched as "fighting terrorism," "protecting national security," and "humanitarian intervention") of the U.S. military whose total annual expenditure is now the largest in the world by far (Chomsky 1999; Parenti 2002; Stiglitz and Bilmes 2008).

The three processes of declining living standards, job export, and international pacification make the current epoch as much a period of crisis as the early and mid-nineteenth century whose own crises spawned political sociology as a discipline. Now, as then, political sociology provides the analytical tools for understanding social processes that might otherwise appear random, chaotic, natural, inevitable, or beneficial which they are to corporate America. The understanding provided by political sociology is systematic and integrated, and it can serve as the basis for intelligent political participation, including struggle for social change, equal rights, economic justice, and democratization.

If we define politics as the area where scarce resources are distributed to society's members, then it is political sociology that explains the pattern of distribution. Who gets what, when, where, why, and how is a major concern of political sociologists. In order to accomplish these analytical tasks more effectively and accurately, sociologists employ various models. Each of these models is a tool for organizing and explaining social reality. Before we proceed to the readings that make up this book, we need to take a look at the major models employed in political sociology.

Models in Political Sociology

The first model we will consider is the pluralist model (Dahl 1956; Truman 1951). Pluralism is a term used in political science and is closely related to its sociological counterpart, structural functionalism. Pluralists argue that modem industrial societies contain multiple or plural centers of power. Government, in other words, is not seen as dominated by a single social class or interest group. Rather, a variety of groups, sometimes with opposite and conflicting interests, compete in the political arena for position and influence. The state itself is seen as neutral toward these groups and not predisposed or partisan toward any one or a related group of them. Political decision making in this model is an outgrowth of power and compromise between groups since none is strong enough to win its way consistently and none so weak that it is shut out all the time. In this give-and-take model, industrial corporations may win over environmentalists one day and lose another, and the same goes for corporations and labor unions, pharmaceutical companies and AIDS advocacy groups, and so on. The pluralist model was once the most widely used in political sociology, but it was effectively challenged and has diminished in popularity among political sociologists in recent decades.

The second model is associated with elite theory. It provides a powerful critique of the pluralist model, but before considering its details we note that political sociologist Berch Berberoglu has suggested a useful distinction with regard to elite theory. He divides elite theory into two branches he calls classical elite theory and radical elite theory (Berberoglu 2001). This classification allows us to discuss two types of elite theory that share one major

characteristic—society is ruled by elites—and at the same time to remain aware of how they differ on several dimensions.

Classical elite theory was developed in the early twentieth century by a group of writers of whom Vilfredo Pareto (1968), Gaetano Mosca (1939), and Robert Michels (1962) are the most prominent. Although there are differences among the three, they share a reasonably consistent set of ideas that allow them to be classified together in this school of political thought. Pareto and Mosca insisted on the inevitability and desirability of rule by small selected elites. These elites were viewed as the fittest to rule by virtue of their superior intelligence, character, and skill. The people, the large majority of society, were viewed as unfit to rule because of their general inferiority when compared to elites. Michels agreed that rule by a select elite was inevitable but attributed this outcome less to a natural law of social systems than to the workings of political parties and other bureaucracies that lent themselves to control by the few and made that outcome a predictable one. This is a deeply pessimistic school of political thought, thoroughly antidemocratic. It is not surprising, therefore, that these ideas were influential in the formulation of Italian fascism in the 1920s and 30s.

Radical elite theory is a more recent development associated with two books published in the 1950s, C. Wright Mills' best-selling study *The Power Elite* (1957) and Floyd Hunter's less well-known but significant *Community Power Structure* (1953). Mills argued that by the 1950s power in the United States had coalesced around three centers—the corporate sector, the federal government, and the military. The top leadership drawn from all three sectors constituted an interlocking national elite. Mills was impressed with the movement of personnel between sectors, for example, the recruitment of corporate executives to serve in presidential cabinets and high ranking military officers moving on to become top-level corporate executives. Whereas Mills' focus was national, Hunter's, with the exception of his later book *Top Leadership, U.S.A.* (1959), was local. In *Community Power Structure,* Hunter examined the structure of governance in the city of Atlanta, Georgia. Hunter developed a methodology now known as the reputational method in which he asked prominent members of the Atlanta community to name its most influential citizens. He found that the names of a narrow core of people associated with business interests kept showing up in the responses. From these results he concluded that the city was governed by a business/financial elite with other groups, even if organized, playing secondary roles in municipal governance.

Radical elite theories are distinguished from classical elite theories in several ways. First, they do not posit the existence of elites as an outgrowth of natural law. For Pareto and Mosca, elite rule was the prevailing pattern of rule in all societies in the past, and they saw no alternative in the future. For Mills and Hunter, elite rule is better explained by examining the history and social structure of particular communities and societies. Second, the classical elite theorists looked down on the masses. For them, the majority is a socially inferior species: less intelligent, petty, feuding, incompetent, apathetic, and, therefore, disqualified to rule. For the radical elite theorists, the citizenry are exploited and manipulated, but that is less a natural condition than a socially conditioned one. In this view, the possibilities for more democratic political structures are open and not excluded by definition. Third, again in contrast to Pareto and Mosca, Mills and Hunter do not celebrate elites. For both of them, elite rule constitutes a disturbing and antidemocratic force in American society because it promotes a narrow band of interests at odds with the best interests of the citizens for economic security, quality education, world peace, environmental integrity, equitable taxes, and freedom from class, race, gender, and ethnic oppression.

The last theoretical perspective is Marxism. In Marxist theory, the core fact for the analysis of society is ownership and control of the means of production. Those who own the productive resources of society—mineral and timber resources, agricultural land, factories and

industrial machinery, offices and office equipment, transportation systems, information and information technologies, and large incorporated businesses—constitute the upper class. This class, by virtue of its economic resources, gains control of the state and rules in ways that promote its interests, again as in radical elite theory, at the expense of the working class. Marxism is distinct from the other perspectives in that it is not limited to politics as a single sphere of analysis. It is broader in that it presents a theory of society, arguing that human history can be divided into a few basic modes of production that provide the material resources and social relationships that give that type of society its unique structure of social institutions and ways of life. Furthermore, it is in the resolution of class struggles within societies that social change is rooted and that we have the progression through history of one type of society evolving out of earlier forms.

Whereas the pluralist model posits the existence of at least a minimum of shared interests between all members of society, Marxist theory sees the upper and working classes in opposition to one another. The former exploits and lives off of the labor of the latter, and this leads to conflict known as class struggle. This conflict is manifested in ways large and small, ranging from careless work habits to armed revolution. As in classical elite theory, Marxism promotes the existence of laws of society, but instead of elite rule it is class struggle that becomes the engine of social conflict and change. Finally, although Marxist theory bears similarities to radical elite theory, Marxist theory differs in important ways. Instead of stressing rule by an elite, Marxism traces the origins of power to ownership patterns in society and insists that those who actually do rule do not do so as an elite but as representatives of a small class that owns and controls the means of production. Marxism also offers a theory of society and not just a theory of politics. The existence of social classes based on differential ownership of the means of production defines (though not absolutely) the nature of other social institutions such as law, education, work, the media, and the family. These other spheres are granted a degree of autonomy, but the key idea is that economic relationships and not other variables such as values, to name an alternative widely promoted in the United States, have the major causal influence in structuring the nature of social institutions (Barrow 1993; Carnoy 1984).

In his text on sociological theory, Irving Zeitlin recognizes Marx's position as the giant of nineteenth-century critical social theory. It is in this body of work that we find a theory of the development of capitalism, an understanding of the social and political organization of society, and an explanation of social change. Zeitlin argues that because of the preeminence of Marx's work, all subsequent social theory is a dialogue with Marx (Zeitlin 2000). We are sympathetic to this interpretation, which is illustrated by our early selections in Sections I and II of this book. We also draw on other later traditions that have tried to revise Marx's theory to fit the more contemporary developments and nuances of advanced industrial capitalist societies or to address important gaps in that theory. These perspectives include radical elite theory, neo-Marxism, critical theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, and postmodernism.

Vernacular Pluralism

Although the influence of pluralist theory has seriously declined since the 1960s, pluralism has always extended far beyond the confines of academic journals, libraries, and conferences. Academic pluralism has always been linked to a popular or vernacular pluralism that has not declined at all. It is healthy and robust although as inaccurate as its academic version. Much K–12 and university level teaching about government and social issues is based on the assumptions, explicit or implied, of the pluralist model. These assumptions also serve as the

foundation for much editorial writing and political speech making. In all these sectors we find the underlying assumptions of the pluralist model made explicit.

Vernacular pluralism consists of the commonplace, foundational assumptions about the civic life of society. In the United States this means assuming that society is democratic. It means assuming that corporate and political leaders (except for an occasional bad apple) have everyone's best interests at heart. It also means assuming that in its relationships with other nations, the United States promotes freedom and democracy and fights tyranny and oppression. Vernacular pluralism embodies an overriding belief in a shared national interest by all the citizenry and the many groups and organizations in which they participate. This assumed, shared collective interest is frequently expressed through the use of first person plural pronouns by political and corporate leaders, as in "We Americans" or "Our interests in the Middle East."

The fallacy of vernacular pluralism is easily brought out when we examine a specific case history. Early in his first term as president, Bill Clinton tried to create a national health insurance system. The United States is the only advanced industrial country without one, which means that Americans have no legal right to health care. For a time in 1993–94, health care was a public issue regularly reported in the mass media. Most participants claimed that their position offered "the best health care plan for America." The fallacy of this format is exposed when we consider two hypothetical people. The first is a single mother, raising two children, and working as a waitress in a middle-level restaurant. The other is the president of a major insurance company. They are both Americans, but there is no best health care plan for America that is the best health care plan for both of them. This is because they belong to different social classes. Vernacular pluralism assumes that we are all in the same boat when we are not.

The single waitress/mother's need for health insurance is personal, while his is structural. She needs health insurance that she can afford and that provides protection for her and her children. He needs health insurance that is privately sold and administered through his company and companies like it and that generates the highest level of profit. If we look at the four major components of health insurance—cost (how much is it?), coverage (what does it cover and what does it exclude?), deductibles (how much does the person have to pay before the insurance company pays?), and limits (what is the maximum the company will pay for a single illness, hospitalization, etc.?)—we can quickly see that what is best for the waitress/mother is the worst for the insurance company president. The best insurance for her is the insurance that is inexpensive, covers all physical and mental illness, has no deductibles, and no limits on insurance payments. The insurance that is best for him, that allows him to please his board of directors and stockholders and guarantees him his job with generous raises and stock options, is just the opposite. What is true of health insurance is true of every area of policymaking—foreign policy, tax policy, education policy, transportation policy, antitrust policy, pension policy, etc.

As long as there are social classes and other social divisions, there will be different and opposing class interests. Vernacular pluralism conceals this and contributes to making people naïve or apathetic and ultimately easier to manipulate and control. In this sense it is dangerous and holds back rather than promotes the strengthening and extension of democracy.

The Readings

The readings for this book have been selected with this danger in mind. All of the readings are written from a critical perspective, broadly defined. Each sheds light on an important aspect of the political system.

We begin with two opening readings. The first is by Joel Kovel, the co-founder of eco-socialism. Kovel wrote the grimmest analysis of climate change I have encountered. Of course, that is not by itself a recommendation or a rejection. However, I did find Kovel's book, *The Enemy of Nature,* well-reasoned and well-documented. In its briefest possible form, Kovel's argument is that climate change is caused by capitalism and its relentless drive for capital accumulation. Without the destruction of capitalism and its replacement with a human oriented, non-avariciously based form of social organization, we are basically doomed. Kovel's position is controversial and contested yet it could be correct and, if so, poses an existential threat to life as we know it. As such it hangs over us, and I am highlighting that point by starting the book off with Kovel.

The second introductory selection is by Yale Magrass. In "That's What They Call Democracy: Capitalism, Democracy and the State" Magrass highlights the limitations of contemporary democracy by arguing that capitalist societies require governments that protect private property. This can be accomplished through force though in advanced states the government can assume democratic forms. We need to be mindful, Magrass reminds us, that this is a form of limited democracy which serves the interests of the very wealthy in the long run.

The bulk of the book is divided into seven sections. Section I addresses the concept of power from several different perspectives including Marxism and neo-Marxism, critical theory, feminism, critical race theory, and postmodernism. These readings examine the material and cultural foundations of power as well as the ways in which power shapes individual identity. The section begins with Karl Marx on commodity fetishism.

The next two sections focus on the state. In Section II, The State: Theory, there are five selections covering Marxism, radical elite theory, feminism, race, and a corrective to C. Wright Mills on the dynamics of power. The readings examine the state, and each offers a leading perspective on the relationship of the state to the larger society developed by researchers over the past half-century. These selections extend the theories of power to the central political institutions of society. Section III is titled The State: Practice. How does the state actually work? The articles in this section examine in turn the ever less equal distribution of wealth and income and what to do about it, the application of a neoliberal agenda and its consequences on the city of New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, voter suppression, the ways in which consent of the governed was established using the New York City fiscal crisis as a case history, and the flawed militarization of the police thesis.

By the mid-twentieth century, the mass media, print and electronic, had become people's primary source of news and information, national and international, and also of entertainment. Among other things, these media serve as important conduits of political ideas and policies that are designed to address social issues within a rather narrow range of options and thereby protect upper-class interests. It is clear that the media play an important political role in shaping political opinion and in manufacturing consent for elite policies. As we have seen, it is unusual for political sociology texts to incorporate material on the mass media, In this book we take a more inclusive approach. Section IV is devoted to the topic of media and ideology and includes writers with a strong grasp of political structure and of the media, and their interface.

Nation-states and the global economy are the subject matter of Section V. Beginning in the 1990s, globalization became the new buzzword for international relations in the political, economic, and cultural spheres. Establishment writers have defined globalization as desirable and inevitable, the wave of the future, bringing with it the free movement of people (workers), raw materials, and goods and services. Yet despite glowing accounts, the process of globalization has not gone uncontested. There have been demonstrations in advanced industrial countries and rebellions in the Third World, indicating that significant numbers of

people are unwilling to accept globalization as the beneficial/benign and inevitable process its promoters allege. Globalization has also raised questions about the role of the nation-state in the global economy. Is it obsolete or much less important than in the past? In Section V we examine various dimensions of globalization.

Many of the earlier readings have dealt with the economic and ideological power of the state. Any discussion of the role of the state in organizing and maintaining social inequality would be incomplete without an examination of the state's coercive power. In Section V, War, Genocide, and Repression, we turn our attention to the coercive power of the state with an examination of war as a protection racket central to state formation; genocide, which in the last century and the current one, has targeted millions of people within and between states; and repression, which victimizes residents of particular states. These are the most humanly tragic expressions of political power, and we intend for these readings to provide a critical, structural analysis of political violence rather than a simply moralistic one.

In Section VII, Revolution and Social Movements, we move from the institutional bases of power to the possibilities for social change. Selections cover both progressive and reactionary social movements. The readings pay attention to the structural forces that give rise to social movements and the internal dynamics which drive them. Contributors include Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, Mark Neocleous, Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, and Noam Chomsky and Charles Derber.

We believe that these topics provide a sound introduction to political sociology with a mix of classic and cutting-edge readings. We do recognize though that there are topics not represented here. We also recognize that while we have tried to represent a range of critical theories, most of the selections are written from a radical elite or Marxist perspective. Furthermore, each perspective actually contains a range of writers and ideas. There is no single Marxist, feminist, or postmodern position on power and its workings. The field of political sociology is simply too broad to cover every issue from every critical perspective. Nevertheless, we do believe that these selections will provide readers with the necessary critical analytical tools to realize Mills's call for a sociology that creates publics and tools they can apply to current and future political issues affecting themselves and millions of others worldwide.

Note

1. We are using the term "Third World" in preference to newer concepts such as "semi-periphery" and "periphery" and the "global South" partly because it is better established and known. More important though is that unlike other terms Third World is associated with Third World leaders at the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia and the Non-Aligned Movement. Third World is also culturally neutral and devoid of the unfortunate cultural assumptions of such terms as underdeveloped or developing nations. We do recognize that the group of Third World nations contains far more diversity in levels of industrialization, military capabilities, and standards of living than when the term was first coined in the early 1950s.

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Chapter 1

The Enemy of Nature

The End of Capitalism or the End of the World?

Joel Kovel

Introduction

In 1970, growing fears for the integrity of the planet gave rise to a new awareness and a new politics. On April 22, the first "Earth Day" was announced, since to become an annual event of re-dedication to the preservation and enhancement of the environment. The movement affected ordinary people and, remarkably, certain members of the elites, who, organized into a group called the Club of Rome, even dared to announce a theme never before entertained by persons of power. This appeared as the title of their 1972 manifesto, *The Limits to Growth*.[1]

Thirty years later, Earth Day 2000 featured a colloquy between Leonardo de Caprio and President Bill Clinton, with much fine talk about saving nature. The anniversary also provided a convenient vantage point for surveying the results of three decades of "limiting growth." At the dawn of a new millennium, one could observe the following:

- The human population had increased from 3.7 billion to 6 billion (62 percent).
- Oil consumption had increased from 46 million barrels a day to 73 million.
- Natural gas extraction had increased from 34 trillion cubic feet per year to 95 trillion.
- Coal extraction had gone from 2.2 billion metric tons to 3.8 billion.
- The global motor vehicle population had almost tripled, from 246 million to 730 million.
- Air traffic had increased by a factor of six.
- The rate at which trees are consumed to make paper had doubled, to 200 million metric tons per year.
- Human carbon emissions had increased from 3.9 million metric tons annually to an estimated 6.4 million – this despite the additional impetus to cut back caused by an awareness of global warming, which was not perceived to be a factor in 1970.
- As for this warming, average temperature increased by 1°F – a disarmingly small number that, being unevenly distributed, translates into chaotic weather events (seven of the ten most destructive storms in recorded history having occurred in the last decade), and an unpredictable and uncontrollable cascade of ecological trauma – including now the melting of the North Pole during the summer of 2000, for the first time in 50 million years, and signs of the disappearance of the "snows of Kilimanjaro" the year following; since then this melting has become a fixture.
- Species were vanishing at a rate that has not occurred in 65 million years.
- Fish were being taken at twice the rate as in 1970.
- Forty percent of agricultural soils had been degraded.
- Half of the forests had disappeared.

- Half of the wetlands had been filled or drained.
- One-half of US coastal waters were unfit for fishing or swimming.
- Despite concerted effort to bring to bay the emissions of ozone-depleting substances, the Antarctic ozone hole was the largest ever in 2000, some three times the size of the continental United States; meanwhile, 2,000 tons of such substances as cause it continue to be emitted every day.[2]
- 7.3 billion tons of pollutants were released in the United States during 1999.[3]

We can add some other, more immediately human costs:

- Third World debt increased by a factor of eight between 1970 and 2000.
- The gap between rich and poor nations, according to the United Nations, went from a factor of 3:1 in 1820, to 35:1 in 1950; 44:1 in 1973 – at the beginning of the environmentally sensitive era – to 72:1 in 1990, roughly two-thirds of the way through it.
- By 2000 1.2 million women under the age of eighteen were entering the global sex trade each year.
- 100 million children were homeless and slept on the streets.

* * * *

Capital's responsibility for the ecological crisis can be shown empirically by tracking down ecosystemic breakdowns to the actions of corporations and/or governmental agencies under the influence of capital's force field. Or it can be deduced from the combined tendencies to degrade conditions of production (the Second Contradiction), on the one hand, and, on the other, the cancerous imperative to expand. Though the Second Contradiction may be offset in individual circumstances by recycling, pollution control, the trading of credits and the like, the imperative to expand continually erodes the edges of ecologies along an ever-lengthening perimeter, overwhelming or displacing recuperative efforts, and accelerating a cascade of destabilization. On occasion, the force of capital expansion can be seen directly – as when President George W. Bush abruptly reversed his pledge to trim emissions of CO_2 in March 2001, the day after the stock market went into free-fall and in the context of a gathering crisis of accumulation. More broadly, it operates through a host of intermediaries embedded within the gigantic machine for accumulation that is capitalist society.

We need to take a closer look at how this society works on the ground. Too much is at stake to close the argument with a demonstration of abstract laws. Capital is no automatic mechanism, and the laws it obeys, being mediated by consciousness, are no more than tendencies. When we say "capital does this" or that, we mean that certain human actions are carried out according to the logic of capital. It behooves us to learn, then, as much as we can about just what these actions are and how they can be changed.

Capital originates with the exploitation of labor, and takes shape as this is subjected to the peculiar forces of money. Its nucleus is the abstraction of human transformative power into labor-power for sale on the market. The nascent capitalist economy was fostered by the feudal state, then took over that state (often through revolution), centering it about capital accumulation. With this, the capitalist mode of production was installed as such – after which capital began to convert society into its image and created the conditions for the ecological crisis. The giant corporations we rightly identify as ecological destroyers are not the whole of capital, but only its prime economic instruments. Capital acts through the corporations, therefore, but also across society and within the human spirit.

Broadly speaking, this has taken place in three dimensions – existentially, temporally, and institutionally. In other words, people increasingly live their lives under the terms of capital; as they do so, the temporal pace of their life accelerates; finally, they live in a world where institutions are in place to secure this across an ever-expanding terrain: the world of *globalization*. In this way a society, and a whole way of being, are created that are hostile to the integrity of ecosystems.

The penetration of life-worlds

The capitalist world is a colossal apparatus of production, distribution, and sales, perfused with commodities. The average Wal-Mart stocks 100,000 separate items (with 600,000 available through its website) and as a drive through America bitterly confirms, Wal-Marts – some 2,500 as of early 2000, with 100 million shoppers a week – spring up everywhere along the roadsides like gigantic toadstools, destroying the integrity of towns and feeding on their decay.[4] By 2006, this creature was spreading across the globe, and plans were announced for building some 300 Wal-Marts in China. There is much more to this than the peddling of mere objects. As capital penetrates society, and as a condition for capital to penetrate society, the entire structure of life is altered.

Each creature inhabits a "life-world," that portion of the universe which is dwelt-in, or experienced.[5] The life-world is, so to speak, what an ecosystem looks like from the standpoint of individual beings within it. The use-values that represent the utility of commodities are inserted into life-worlds, the point of insertion being registered subjectively as a want or desire, and objectively as a set of needs. As capital penetrates life-worlds, it alters them in ways that foster its accumulation, chiefly by introducing a sense of dissatisfaction or lack – so that it can truly be said that happiness is forbidden under capitalism, being replaced by sensation and craving. In this way, children develop such a craving for caffeine-laced, sugar-loaded, or artificially sweetened soft drinks that it may be said that they positively *need* them (in that their behavior disintegrates without such intake); or grown-ups develop a similar need for giant sports-utility vehicles, or find gas-driven leaf-blowers indispensable for the conduct of life; or are shaped to take life passively from the TV screen, or see the shopping malls and their endless parking lots as the "natural" setting of society.

* * * *

. . . capital produces wealth without end, but also poverty, insecurity, and waste, as part of its disintegration of ecosystems. As there is no single commodity (really, a vast system of commodities) more implicated in this than the automobile, we might round out this section with some thoughts about "automobilia"[6] and its related syndromes, including the newly discovered disease of Road Rage. Automobilia is a prime example of how rationality at the level of the part becomes irrationality at the level of the whole. Individually, cars are far better than a generation ago: they are safer, more reliable, more fuel efficient, longer lasting, and more comfortable. In the interior of a reasonably advanced car one encounters "all the comforts of home": luxurious adjustable seats, cell phone, splendid sound system, carefully controlled air – the whole package, as the salesman says. The interior of a car projects an image of a technological utopia, which is convenient, since so many people spend so much time inside them. Step outside the car, though, say on a busy road to fill up with gasoline, and the externalization of a disorder that more than compensates for the internalized order becomes clear. A horrendous cacophony assaults body and soul. Unlike a waterfall, even a train that organizes the human landscape, the cars just roar on; there is no pattern, no particularized, differentiated tale to be told. There is no integral ecology to it; it is just endless,

consuming traffic – eons of stored sunlight converted into inertial momentum so that individuals can go their own way in capitalist liberty. And it is repeated in thousands and thousands of places, every day and night – carbon dioxide going into the air for global warming; other substances entering the chains that lead to photochemical smog or destruction of the ozone layer; fine particulate matter (think of the hundreds of millions of tires grinding down against concrete) entering lungs to help create a planetary epidemic of asthma, along with other heart and lung diseases; the above-mentioned noise adding another dimension of pollution; landscapes torn up and paved over, historically breaking down the boundary between city and country while blighting both with strip malls, thickets of garish signs (for how else can people in constant motion see where to shop?), and great swooping freeways on which we hurtle like so many corpuscles in the circulation of capital – the ensemble disintegrating, as has nothing else, the fabric of human ecology.

The ruinousness of automobilia is bound up with its absolutely crucial role in the global economy – combined, to be sure, with the ensemble of densely associated industries like oil, rubber, cement, construction, repairs, etc.; and equally, from its embeddedness in the entire landscape of lived life, indeed, the very construction of the self. Deep changes in needs accompany the growth of automobilia. If one is trapped within a stifling existence, then driving away from it, even if this is just to go round and round in traffic-clogged circles (contributing, of course, to the clogging), is experienced as a release. This is one reason it is easy for the automobilious giants to spin forth their greenwashed ads that show people blithely moving, no other car in sight, across the very landscapes they are actually wrecking, or to depict ecological advances in the production of cars that are, however rational in the particular instance, simply overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of cars produced.

Looming overcapacity hangs over the automobile industries, as it does for capitalist production in general, with the ability to make some 80 million cars a year, and but 55 million or so able to be sold. Those unrealized 25 million vehicles are a giant splinter in the soul of capitalism, and the goad to endless promotion of automobilious values. From 1970 to 2000, the population of the United States grew by some 30 percent – while the number of licensed drivers grew more than 60 percent, the number of registered vehicles nearly doubled and the total vehicle-miles driven more than doubled.[7] Notably, the miles of road added during this period has gone up but 6 percent. This figure is product of a set of hopeless choices: either perish in nightmarish traffic, or further destroy lived space with gargantuan roads (and eventually perish under even more traffic, which fills newly created highways like gas in a vacuum). Even the relatively low figure of 6 percent translates into major changes in certain strategic locations. One is continually astounded, for example, by the numbers of lanes added to Los Angeles freeways (at some points, eight in either direction by my recent estimate, with additional ones now being added above the roadway).[8]

As the logic of automobilia unfolds, new levels of disintegration appear, and even people deeply acculturated into the ways of motorcars crack under the strain of contemporary vehicular life. Road rage, a new "mental illness," is one outcome, resulting directly or indirectly in some 28,000 traffic deaths a year caused by "aggressive behavior like tailgating, weaving through busy lanes, honking or screaming at other drivers, exchanges of insults and even gunfire." This figure, though provided by chief federal highway safety official, Ricardo Martinez, may be speculative; another survey, however, describes 1,500 homicides a year whose instigation is directly traffic-related. According to Leon James, a psychologist from Hawaii, "Driving and habitual road rage have become virtually inseparable. This is the age of rage mentality." James cites as contributing factors, a "tightly wound 'controlled' personality type" for whom driving provides a release from "normal, frustration filled existences" and gives rise to "fantasies of omnipotence." Observe that the personality type in question is itself

an adaptation to the capitalist marketplace, while the second factor, the omnipotent release from frustration provided by driving, is a basic component of the use-value of automobiles, hammered home by car chases in movies, and the romanticization of auto advertisements. Road rage may be a mental illness, but one completely within the universe of capitalism's automobilia.[9]

* * * *

The indictment

Capitalism bestrides the world because of its fantastic ability to produce wealth – and to induce the wealth-producing side of human nature. The result is the most powerful form of human organization ever devised, and also the most destructive. Capital's advocates claim that its destructivity can be contained and that capital, as it matures, will peacefully overcome the rapacity shown in its phases of primitive accumulation, the way Sweden advanced from its Viking past. Give us a little more time, they argue, and globalization will truly become the tide that raises all boats and not just the yachts of the wealthy, while the general increase in wealth will enable the earth which is harbor for these boats to be made snug and bright.

An opposite conclusion is argued here. I hold instead that with the production of capitalist wealth, and, as an integral part of it, poverty, eternal strife, insecurity, ecodestruction, and, finally, nihilism are also produced. These concomitants may be externalized and exported, so long as production is local and restricted. But as capital matures and becomes global, the escape routes are sealed and its cancerous character is revealed – penetrating all spheres of human existence, destabilizing the ecologies of space and time, and subjecting the earth to an increasingly authoritarian and corrupt regime.

The ecological crisis is the name for the global eco-destabilization accompanying global accumulation. Capital has shown a phenomenal resiliency and ability to absorb all contradiction in its logic of exchange – this is a main reason why various modes of revolt have come and gone, leaving only bitter memorials behind, as Che Guevara has become the name for a brand of beer. In the ecological crisis, however, the logic of exchange itself becomes the source of destabilization, and the more it is drawn into the picture, the more corrupt and unstable becomes the relation to nature. Capital cannot recuperate the ecological crisis because its essential being, manifest in the "grow or die" syndrome, is to produce such a crisis, and the only thing it really knows how to do, which is to produce according to exchange-value, is exactly the source of the crisis. In other words, it regards the ecological crisis through the distorting lens of the effect on accumulation; by seeking to remedy the latter, which is all, really, that capital can care about, it necessarily worsens the former. This is seen very clearly in the regime of emissions trading set up under the Kyoto Protocols.

And, finally, capital's iron tendency to produce poverty along with wealth and to increase the gap between rich and poor, means that capitalist society must remain authoritarian at the core and incapable of developing the cooperative space for rationally contending with the ecological crisis. Freeing up human creative power, which is our best chance to overcome ecological decay, is simply anathema to it.

The logic of this argument is not yoked to the appearance of some sudden overwhelming calamity, nor to the more likely concurrence of a great number of smaller weakening blows leading to collapse, nor even to the possibility that the system will muddle through. It is predicated rather on demonstrating the utter unworthiness of capitalism to shepherd civilization through the crisis it has engendered by its cancerous expansion. The above-mentioned

contingent disasters may happen one way or another, or some or all of them may not happen at all, but we must be perfectly clear that they are primed to happen, and that capitalism, far from providing remedies, makes them more likely the more it fulfills itself.

That is why, in this excursion through the peculiarities of capital and capitalism, I have emphasized the anti-ecological features of capitalist production rather than the particulars of its relation to the crisis. Only the barest suggestion has been given of the innumerable instances of environmental assault; of the great propaganda system and its greenwashing campaign; of the betrayal of ecological responsibility by the established media; of the perfidy of individual politicians and parties; of the cooptation of environmental groups; of the complicity of the scientific establishment; of the tangled legal system; and of the efforts to suppress and intimidate environmentalists.

But we should not lose sight of the whole picture in attending to particulars: There is a single world-dominating order, and even though it still has not reached everywhere, it cannot be reformed, cannot be satisfied with less than everything, and has the institutions in place for its purposes. No set of individual reforms can encompass what capital means, nor drive it out by the root. Therefore, no matter how meritorious or necessary any particular reform may be, the fact remains that it is capital as a whole that has to be confronted and brought down, as daunting as that prospect may be.

Notes

1. D. Meadows et al, *The Limits to Growth* (London: Earth Island, 1972).
2. D. Meadows et al, *Beyond the Limits* (London: Earthscan, 1992). Much of this is taken from Donella Meadows, "Earth Day Plus Thirty, as Seen by the Earth," distributed on the internet. Meadows, tragically recently deceased, is also a co-author of *Beyond the Limits*, the follow-up to *The Limits to Growth*. In that book it was argued hopefully—but mistakenly—that of all the environmental crises ozone depletion is the only one for which concerted international effort has been successful. In 2006 Al Gore made a similar claim about the wonderful power of collective state effort to bring about ozone reduction. However, in October, 2006 NASA reported that the Antarctic hole was the biggest ever, covering 11 million square miles. This is best accounted for by the runaway effects of global production overriding the prudence of regulation.
3. Personal communication, Daniel Faber. This is the highest for the ten-year period during which such measurements have been taken (these being, according to Faber, almost certainly too low, as the information is based on voluntary reports by corporations).
4. M. Slatella, "Boxed In: Exploring the Big-Box Store On-line," *New York Times*. (January 17, 2000): D4.
5. The name derives from the phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl.
6. The term is from P. Freund and G. Martin, *The Ecology of the Automobilia* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993).
7. T. Purdom, "A Game of Nerves, with No Real Winners," *New York Times*. (May 17, 2000): H1.
8. As bad as the situation in the United States may be, it is dwarfed by the traffic-generated nightmares of cities in the "newly industrializing countries." In NIC's, an even more unregulated capital induces São Paulo, Brazil, where the rich have taken to using helicopters to avoid roads "hopelessly clogged with traffic" and subject to the "carjackings, kidnappings of executives and roadside robberies [that] have become part of the risks of everyday life for anyone perceived to have money." However hard it may be to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, it is easier for a rich man to buy a helicopter than for a poor man to buy a car in São Paulo-nor is parking much of a problem, as the gated communities where many rich people reside offer ideal settings for landing pads. The noisy monsters have predictably become status symbols ("Why settle for an armored BMW when you can afford a helicopter?" goes one slogan), as some 400 flit through the air and create an even more nightmarish environment for the average citizen. (See S. Romero, "Rich Brazilians Rise Above Rush-Hour Jams," *New York Times*. (February 15, 2000): A1.) Gated communities, with private police forces and the like, are a major accompaniment of the ecological crisis as it affects urban space in the age of automobilia.
9. M. Wald, "Temper Cited as Cause of 28,000 Road Deaths a Year," *New York Times*. (July 18, 1997): A14. A. Turner, "Tempers in Overdrive," *Houston Chronicle*. (April 8, 2000): 1A.

Chapter 2

That's What They Call Democracy

Capitalism, Democracy, and the State

Yale R. Magrass

A capitalist economy needs a government committed to preserving private property. Such a government can assume a democratic form, and usually does, but it is a type of democracy which in the long run serves the needs of the very wealthy.

Principal terms

Class Struggle: the conflict between the rich and powerful, trying to maintain their property and position, and those who, lacking such privilege, challenge their authority.

Hegemony: domination, including physical coercion, legal authority, economic control, and the power to shape how others understand their own experiences and the world around them (ideological hegemony).

Legitimation: the process by which most people come to see their society as worthy of loyalty, ideally because it is just and serves its citizens' needs.

Means of Production: narrowly defined, the tools, technologies, raw materials, and economic institutions, such as banks, factories, offices, shops, farms and ranches which are necessary for society to maintain itself.

Neo-Liberalism: Contrary to what the name implies, neo-liberalism is actually a conservative ideology. It promotes the view that the ruling class (see below) should run the economy with little involvement by the government. Under neo-liberal ideology, the welfare of the ordinary citizen is not something with which the state should be concerned. However, the government should be prepared to militarily intervene in other countries to protect investments of corporations. Neo-liberalism has been the dominant American ideology at least since the Reagan presidency. Students may find this term confusing because they often associate liberalism with the belief that the state should help provide social services like unemployment protection, education and health care. This is what liberalism meant during the New Deal from 1932 to 1980. Neo-liberalism is based on the beliefs of founders of capitalism like Adam Smith, John Locke and Jeremy Bentham who called themselves liberals in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Ruling Class: a group which controls the means of production and as a result dominates the economy. Such overwhelming economic power usually leads to comparable political power.

Overview

One of the defining characteristics of capitalism is that it treats the economy as independent from the government. In medieval feudalism, the lords both controlled the means of production, the land, and assumed governmental authority under a legal system explicitly organized

to preserve their class privilege. Under state socialism, like in the old Soviet Union, the means of production, the factories, farms, and commercial and financial institutions, were operated by the government bureaucracy. In general, capitalism regards the means of production as **private property** owned by private citizens to use as they choose with little involvement from the state.

Democratic government is attractive to capitalism because it grants the private citizen rights with which the state, at least ideally, agrees not to interfere. High on that list of rights is the pursuit of private property. John Locke,[1] one of the founding philosophers of Anglo-American democracy and an ancestor of neo-liberalism, believed the state was formed as a contract signed by property owners to protect their rights against the propertyless masses. The implication is that those without property are without state sanctioned rights and the more property one has, the more rights one possesses.

This appears to contradict democracy's claim that everyone is equal, but the capitalist interpretation of democracy calls for equality under law. Everyone is subject to the same rules. Justice is blind; it knows no rich or poor. If the law forbids vagrancy, rich and poor vagrants must face the same sentence. Everyone has the same right to use their property as they see fit. Billionaires have the same right to control their banks, factories, airlines, and oil wells as paupers to eat their crusts of bread. Corporations can use their right of free speech to donate as much as they wish to candidates for public office, who will then be indebted to them.[2] If all property is entitled to equal protection under law, then the government provides people protection in proportion to what they own.

The capitalist understanding of equality offers no one a promise of resources, merely the right to try to acquire them. Those who are thought to have failed have no one to blame but themselves, and are entitled only to what the successful, in their sense of compassion, feel like giving them. Someone without a job has no right to expect anyone to employ her. Everyone has an equal right to prosper or starve. The democratic government in its commitment to equality and fairness is to be neutral and stay out of class struggle. Among the primary responsibilities of the state are maintaining order and ensuring that rules are equitably enforced. To maintain order, it must play a conservative role, being committed to keeping things as they already are—in other words, guaranteeing that those who have, have and those who don't, don't. For the state to stay out of class struggle is to side with the already rich and powerful, the capitalist ruling class.[3] When the U.S. Supreme Court treats multi-billionaire corporations as "persons" or "citizens" freely competing as equals with their employees and customers on a level playing field, it almost guarantees the corporation will win.

The restrictions upon government power, imposed by capitalist democracy, mean that much of the responsibility for maintaining society falls upon private citizens. Capitalism tends to concentrate wealth into relatively few hands. Although estimates vary, the richest 1 percent of Americans own about 53% of corporate stocks and mutual funds.[4] This wealthiest 1 percent is in a position to make decisions which profoundly affect the lives of everyone else. They can largely determine the availability of jobs, housing, nutrition, fuel, energy, transportation, information, arts, culture, and recreation as well as whether the country will be at peace or war, with whom, and for how long. In some sense, they form an invisible, or unofficial, private government because they fill a power vacuum, created when the legally established state did not assume hegemony over these areas.

The line separating public and private concerns is fuzzy. In America, most urban bus and subway rail systems are government operated, but interstate bus companies are private corporations. Private companies, like Federal Express, deliver the mail along with the United States Postal Service. Most electrical utilities are privately owned, but not the ones operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority, a federal agency. A private corporation operating a utility,

a railroad or health insurance would seem to have power comparable to a government agency administering one. Perhaps, the private corporation may have even greater autonomy because its directors are self-appointed and never have to account to the electorate. The rights promised by capitalist democracy limit state authority, not private hegemony. Freedom of the press is essentially a property right. It means that those who own the press, usually multi-billion dollar corporations like the New York Times, CBS, and CNN, can decide what is broadcast and printed. Although private, they can determine what most people see and hear. The "public's right to know" is not written into the United States constitution.

Although the ruling class and the government are separate entities, the very rich are represented in politics far out of proportion to their share of the population. At least half of United States Senators are millionaires, as well as most presidents since 1900. While William Clinton grew up relatively poor, by the time Hillary lost the presidency to billionaire Donald Trump, the couple had amassed a fortune of about $240 million through their political connections.[5] The very rich consistently find themselves in cabinet seats, as governors, as heads of federal agencies, and on the U.S. Supreme Court. Former presidents of automobile companies have served as Secretary of Defense, like Charles Wilson[6] and Robert McNamara.[7] Leading investment bankers, like Andrew Mellon,[8] C. Douglas Dillon,[9] and Donald Regan,[10] have been Secretaries of the Treasury. President Ronald Reagan's Secretary of State, George Schlutz, and his Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, were the former president and vice-president of the same multi-billion dollar corporation, Bechtel.[11] When the United States invaded Iraq, one of the largest military contractor and builder of oil wells in the Persian Gulf was Halliburton, whose former CEO was Vice President Richard Cheney. Cheney had also served as Secretary of Defense.[12]

This pattern of revolving doors between government and corporate suites continues into the present with Barack Obama's first Secretary of the Treasury, Timothy Geithner,[13] becoming president of Warburg Pincus, a Wall Street equity firm worth $40 billion. Obama's second Secretary of Commerce, John Bryson,[14] had been CEO of Edison International, the primary producer of electricity for Southern California, which relies heavily on nuclear energy. Donald Trump's first Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, was CEO of ExxonMobil.[15] Trump's Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, was CEO of the New York branch of the international banking house, Rothschild.[16] His Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, was both the daughter and wife of billionaires.[17]

Nevertheless in a democracy, many of the highest state positions are elected, but campaigning for those offices can be very expensive. An American senatorial race can cost tens of millions of dollars; a presidential election, close to a billion. Anyone seeking these posts must either be very rich or else appeal to those able to donate, primarily the well-to-do. The wealthiest candidate does not always win. In the 1992 presidential election, William Clinton, although from a relatively modest background, defeated multi-millionaire George Bush, Sr. and billionaire Ross Perot. In the process of achieving the presidency, Clinton embraced the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which eliminated many trade barriers and permitted the free flow of capital, investments, products, factories and jobs between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. NAFTA was endorsed by most of the capitalist class (with exceptions like Perot and Trump), but opposed by most labor unions.

Although Barack Obama did not grow up rich, he defeated Mitt Romney, the son of the CEO of now defunct American Motors, the manufacturer of Rambler—a popular car in the 1950s and 60s. Mitt Romney himself, as the CEO of Bain Capital, had a dominant interest in such corporations as Staples, Domino's Pizza, AMC Theater and Duncan Donuts, among others.[18] When he was governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney created a program to guarantee medical care for all residents but it left health insurance in the hands of private

companies. When Romney ran for president, he attacked Obama for developing a national medical care system which was modeled after Romney's own initiative in Massachusetts. Like Romney's Massachusetts plan, Obama's program did not threaten for-profit private insurance companies, which were kept intact.[19] Some Democrats, including Bernie Sanders, considered "Obamacare" inadequate and believed the federal government should assume control of medical insurance, which is the policy in almost all other advanced industrial nations.[20]

To raise funds, candidates, who are themselves not rich, usually must offer platforms which do not threaten the wealth and power of the capitalist class. This does not imply every capitalist would happily embrace all their policies. Capitalists have vehement debates among themselves. Trump, whose sole political experience is the presidency, may have been a billionaire real estate mogul but he faced opposition from many fellow capitalists, including Mitt Romney, who feared Trump was too blatant in pursuing policies which would expose the state as the servant of the very rich and not the general population. Another example was when Perot adamantly fought NAFTA, which Trump called "the worst trade in history."[21] However, capitalist hegemony means they, as a class, can set the terms under which issues are defined and discussed. A candidate who wished to abolish private property or outlaw all industrial pollution probably could not wage a serious campaign because he could not raise enough money or receive respectful attention from the privately-owned media. Bernie Sanders called himself a socialist but he had to make clear that his model was the social democracies of Europe, where the economies are still dominated by private corporations.[22] During the energy crisis of the 1970s, when oil companies insisted prices were too low for them to profitably supply the nation's energy needs, hardly a voice was heard proposing that the government confiscate the oil fields. In public discourse, the viable alternative to fossil fuels was conceived as nuclear power which would be operated by highly centralized corporations, rather than solar or wind. For several decades afterwards, nuclear power was dismissed as too dangerous but it had a resurgence when the public began to fear that fossil fuels might provoke climate change severe enough to threaten the biosphere.

True ideological hegemony means virtually everyone in society understands their own biographies, experiences, perceptions, needs, desires, communities, and knowledge through a framework modeled by the ruling class. A class truly controls society if they control what is in other people's minds, the very categories and language which almost everyone else uses to construct their view of the world. A ruling class has little reason to fear challenges if other classes see existing social conditions, including the distribution of wealth and power, as right, proper, and inevitable. It may be that ultimate power is unseen; an invisible government may hold more power than an official one. Democratic government presents the impression that there is no ruling class, that the people rule themselves—politically, economically, and ideologically. In a democracy, most people will accept life as it is because they believe it is of their own making. The government belongs to everyone. It protects everyone's rights, everyone's property. Small homeowners must feel secure that the police will patrol their community; small savers must know their bank accounts are guaranteed by federal deposit insurance. Everyone is equal. The same law which protects the homes and bank accounts of the average citizen protects the banks, factories, and estates of the very rich. Accordingly, the average citizen feels invested in maintaining conditions as they are and feels loyalty to the existing government.

Legitimation requires that ordinary people see the government as serving their needs. It cannot be regarded as the explicit tool of a select few. Capitalism as a system needs a state that will preserve order and appear legitimate, not one that will do what every rich person wants every time. All the desires of each individual capitalist can never be satisfied.

Capitalists compete; their desires conflict. The owner of a textile mill, living in a region with powerful unions and forced to pay his workers relatively well, might support a law calling for a higher national minimum wage. Such a law might be opposed by his competitors who would lose the advantage lower wages gave them. Minimum wages might be endorsed by much of the capitalist class, but it would certainly not be welcome by many employers.[23] Although such laws might serve some industrialists, they would also create the impression the government protects workers against the more abusive employers. In order to provide legitimacy, to build the image that the state is class neutral and belongs to everyone, the government might occasionally side with ordinary people against some sectors of the ruling class. This can happen more easily when some capitalists have reasons to support policies which help the relatively poor at the expense of others among the very rich. Occupational health and safety standards, pollution controls, welfare benefits, unemployment and retirement insurance, and graduated income taxes are all programs that seem to serve ordinary citizens, often to the detriment of many capitalists. A careful study of how many of these programs came about would reveal that many of them were not automatically rejected by all the very rich, but were fiercely debated.[24] In their passage, some capitalists benefited as did many ordinary people. Ordinary people might be reluctant to reject a society that gives them such security. A society which seems to benefit everyone might benefit its ruling class most of all.

Democracy may be the ideal government for capitalism. However, there are occasions when legitimation breaks down. In a crisis when order collapses, the state can declare an emergency and suspend the rights democracy grants. In capitalism, the primary function of the state is to protect private property. If democracy is in danger of failing to serve this purpose, other governmental forms may be tried. In Germany in the early 1930s, when the Weimar Republic was on the brink of falling and socialism seemed possible, many industrialists and bankers preferred to abandon democracy and turn to the Nazis. In Chile in 1970, a Marxist, Salvador Allende, was democratically elected president. He nationalized the copper mines, antagonizing the World Bank, multinational corporations like International Telephone and Telegraph, along with much of the Chilean military. By 1973, these opponents orchestrated Allende's violent overthrow and replaced Chilean democracy with military rule.[25] Dictatorship interferes with rights for all citizens, including capitalists and their property. Democracy provides a legitimacy that makes capitalist rule easier. However, if a choice must be made between democracy and capitalist power, democracy may be vulnerable.

Applications

The invisible government is often in a position to set policies which virtually determine how everyone else will live and sets the agenda for the official state. In the 1930s, Los Angeles had one of the world's largest interurban railway systems. However, General Motors and Standard Oil of California jointly purchased it through holding companies. They removed the electric trolleys and the power transmission lines, replacing them with buses built by General Motors and fueled by Standard Oil. With public transportation less available, more people bought private cars, again to the benefit of companies like General Motors and Standard Oil. With greater demand for automobiles, the state diverted most of its budget for public transportation in Los Angeles County to building an elaborate network of freeways, which made the average citizen all the more dependent upon private cars.[26] The freeways led to a decentralized Los Angeles, weakening neighborhood cohesion, with people living further from where they worked, shopped, and played. Investment decisions made by

private corporations resulted in restricting most people's choice of lifestyle and the government's choice of policy.

There are, nevertheless, limits to the power of the secret government. Individual members of the ruling class, however powerful, are still private citizens and lack the authority to impose their will on the rest of their class. Henry Ford built one of the world's largest companies by making automobiles affordable to ordinary people, but he could make cars only so cheaply. His market was restricted by people's ability to pay. In 1914, he decided he would pay his workers no less than $5.00 a day when wages in his industry averaged $2.34 a day.[27] As powerful as Ford was, he could not force other capitalists to raise their wages. Capitalists as individuals like to pay their workers as little as possible, but capitalism as a system requires that wages be high enough so people can consume what they produce. Ford could not make his rival capitalists forgo their personal profits for the sake of the interests of their class. Only the official state could do that, something which Ford opposed. The disparity between prices and what wages would allow people to buy helped bring about the Great Depression in 1929. When customers cannot afford to buy, corporations cannot profit.[28]

The depression provoked debates among all sectors of society—capitalists and workers. The deteriorating standard of living was in danger of undermining ordinary people's faith that America was not only capitalist, but also democratic, and capable of providing for all its citizens. Some within the upper class, by no means all, believed the state must intervene to "save capitalism from itself."[29] In the midst of this crisis, President Franklin Roosevelt initiated the New Deal, which included such programs as Social Security, unemployment insurance, public works projects, state sanctioning of labor unions, minimum wages, and increased government regulation of business. Capitalism survived with the government more active in the economy and appearing to occasionally side with ordinary people against the very rich. From a Wall Street banking family, Roosevelt was condemned by some as a "traitor to his class," but there was a possibility that without such a traitor, the rule of his class may have been imperiled.

Roosevelt's New Deal may have brought forty years of prosperity, but by 1980 the American standard of living was stagnating and U.S. corporations were losing their international dominance. In response, Ronald Reagan initiated policies that would deliberately skew wealth upward and widen the gap between the ultra-rich and everyone else.[30] At least until Trump's presidency, the Reagan neo-liberal agenda continues to be implemented and the disparity between the 1% and the 99% still grows.

Context

Among the focal questions in political sociology, political economy and political science are: who governs? whom does the state serve? how do the government and the rest of society affect each other? Capitalist economies routinely coexist with democratic governments. In countries like the United States, most citizens are taught to believe they are self-governing and the state represents all the people equally. Under the banner of pluralist theory, many social scientists specializing in politics have published countless articles and books which argue that power is widely distributed and there is no ruling class.[31] These same social scientists would put preserving order near the top of a list of responsibilities assigned to the state. However, they often neglect to ask whom does the existing social order most benefit. Preserving a capitalist distribution of wealth and power does put severe restraints upon the state, perhaps especially a democratic state. A democratic capitalist state must disguise the fact that its primary duty is to keep the rich, rich. That means the benefits which the elite receives are not always straight forward. The 99% must be thrown some bones. As a result,

some sectors of the upper class occasionally have reason to ally with average citizens against others in their own class. To preserve social order, the state needs to appear legitimate; it must offer security and even a sense of meaning, perhaps in the form of freedom and opportunity, to almost everyone. An understanding of how a democratic state operates within a capitalist economy will give everyone—citizen, social scientist, and political activist—essential tools to discern the origins and purposes of government policies, and will help in deciding what to support and why. Other articles in this book—*Power and Inequality*—should help the reader consider these issues as they address what the state really does, the role of the state within the global economy, how ideologies are constructed, what are the real causes of war, racial and ethnic persecution and genocide, and how might the ordinary citizen strive to change oppressive and destructive conditions through action with others.

Notes

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Section I

Critical Theories of Power

In our introduction we identified power as the central concept in political sociology. Here we develop this concept by offering selections that illustrate the varying interpretations of power held by critical social theorists. However, we need to first consider what is meant by power. In his classic formulation Max Weber distinguished between power (the ability to command) and authority (the legitimacy of the command). He distinguished three types of authority—traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal. For our purposes, we prefer to look at the mainstream treatment of power in sociology and political science since it serves as the foundation or take off point for Steven Lukes' treatment of power. It is Lukes' analysis of power that we will rely on in this book. Conventional definitions of power refer to the ability of an actor to achieve aims in the face of opposition from others. Robert Dahl (1956), for example, defines power "as A's capacity for acting in such a manner as to control B's responses." Dahl's pluralist definition applies to cases where there is a visible conflict and an outcome in which there is a winner determined when A has controlled and overcome B's responses. In other words, A wins. Implicit in Dahl's definition is the idea that power is generally dispersed throughout society. An actor's capacity for power will depend on the specific resources they possess and the specific issue being decided, and so "power is non-hierarchically and competitively arranged" (Held 1987:189) with no one actor dominant on all (or most) issues.

In his landmark book Power: A Radical View Steven Lukes sees this pluralist interpretation as a "one-dimensional" view of power because of its exclusive focus on the behavior of actors in the making of decisions on specific issues over which there is an observable conflict of interest between the parties. For Lukes, however, power implies much more than the ability to make decisions, and he adds second and third dimensions of power to account for the exercise of power in the absence of observable conflict.

In the first of these instances power refers to the ability to place limits on the kinds of issues that can be discussed and decided upon by the interested parties. What Lukes calls the "two-dimensional" view of power "involves examining both *decision-making* and *non-decision-making,"* by which he means the exclusion of issues or interests from meeting agendas and political debates. This exclusion can occur through such means as coercion, influence, the acceptance of legitimate authority, force, and manipulation. If called attention to, the standard defenses are ostracism, verbal and physical attacks and feigned absentmindedness. For example, in electoral politics voters may exercise decision-making power by selecting one candidate for political office over another, but non-decision-making power lies with those who are able to shape the rules of the electoral process in the first place. To the extent that potential candidates do not run in or candidates drop out of electoral contests because of a lack of money or poor media coverage, the options available to voters have already been shaped by other actors. Those actors who can set the agenda for decision making by admitting certain issues and interests and excluding others by granting or withholding financial

and other resources necessary to run a successful political campaign have a degree of power that extends beyond that found in the decision-making process itself.

In the second instance, and more significantly, power also means the ability to prevent the emergence of issues in the first place. Even the two-dimensional view of power is limited, according to Lukes, by its focus on excluding *existing* issues from the decision-making process. But what if people feel no grievances, and are unaware of an issue? As Lukes eloquently states,

> is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial?

In this "three-dimensional" view of power, Lukes suggests that actors' locations in historically specific social institutions shapes what they see and experience in the world and that, in turn, shapes their understanding of the possibilities for social change. The absence of observable conflict does not necessarily imply a social consensus, but rather a generalized acceptance of a socially constructed "common sense" that reinforces fundamental social relations. While not identical, Lukes's formulation of this third dimension of power recalls Gramsci's concept of hegemony and Marcuse's new forms of control (see below).

The readings in this section provide important critical statements of this three-dimensional view of power. With the concept of commodity fetishism, Karl Marx explained how people tend to see the products of their labor as having an existence and value independent of their human creation or the way in which they satisfy human needs. Commodities, Marx explains, come from the application of labor power to raw materials. If the resulting item, say a table, is for personal use, there is no mystery about it, and its value is in its use value. However, when the product enters the market as a commodity, it is transformed into something transcendent, and its value is determined by market relations. These include its value in relation to other commodities, as well as the conditions of production, such as workers and owners, quality of the labor applied and its duration, wages paid, and so on. These profoundly social relations are mystified and obscured to such a degree that Marx employs the concept of fetishism to understand them,

In capitalism generally, objects are produced and exchanged not to satisfy specific human needs, but as a means to the end of increased capital accumulation. Because workers do not control the process of production or the products they produce, they are likely to experience the product of their labor not as an expression of their individuality or as a contribution to the welfare of others, but as an alien object that oppresses them. Likewise, the social relations through which objects are produced are obscured to the extent that the monetary value of commodities serves as the basis for exchange. Marx argued that commodity fetishism characterized all social relationships in capitalism. Social institutions and relations that are created and reproduced by people come to be experienced as natural, universal, and absolute, beyond the ability of their creators to change them. Thus, although capitalism is a historically specific creation of human actors, it appears to people as an inevitable and unchangeable force.

One of the central questions for the Frankfurt School of critical theory that emerged after World War I in Germany was to understand why groups that might have an objective interest in transforming society may either be unaware of those interests or not act on them. What Herbert Marcuse called "two-dimensional thought" recognizes contradictions between what

is and what could be, but modern capitalist society suppresses the development of two-dimensional thought. Instead, "one-dimensional thought" closes off criticism and an understanding of possible alternatives. We internalize a technological rationality that enslaves us to a life of alienated labor and alienated consumption and that destroys the social environment. We are, in a world characterized by one-dimensional thought, unable to see how technology could be used to free people and satisfy human needs. The desire for freedom itself becomes a commodity (think about the number of advertisements that emphasize freedom and individuality), thereby ensuring that it is safely contained and managed on terms favorable to dominant social forces.

Antonio Gramsci, a founder of the Italian Communist Party and writing from a prison cell in Mussolini's fascist Italy, developed the concept of hegemony to understand how the power of dominant classes is reproduced. Gramsci argued that coercion is an insufficient base for power. Although coercion is an important element of power (as we shall see in the section on war, genocide, and repression), power in modern, advanced capitalist societies is expressed through the construction of hegemony, which refers to the cultural and intellectual dominance of the ruling class through a coherent system of values, beliefs, norms, and symbols that are supportive of the established order. The power of dominant classes requires that their worldview be accepted and internalized by subordinate groups as "common sense," thereby limiting opportunities for subordinate groups to be critical and conceive of social alternatives. Hegemony is not imposed, but rather is a negotiated process in which dominant groups must often grant concessions to subordinate groups in order to ensure the latter's continued consent. Thus, even though the state is a major means by which dominant groups exercise their power, Gramsci directs our attention to the institutions of civil society such as religion, education, the media, and the family that generate a cultural "common sense."

The postmodernist thinker Michel Foucault rejected the idea that power has a center. What many people have seen as the failure of revolutionary movements to successfully transform society or, once taking power, their degeneration into bureaucratic and often self-destructive systems was explained, for Foucault, by the fact that such movements are misdirected. Because power is diffuse and fragmented, a network with threads that extend everywhere, there are no commanding heights, such as the state, whose overthrow would mark a new era. Foucault was more interested in how power operates at the local level to construct individuals. Like Marcuse, social control was a central concern for Foucault, and he linked it to the development of micro-technologies of surveillance both to control the behavior of individuals and to diffuse norms for very large groups of people. This led to an environment of panopticism, named after Jeremy Bentham's late 18th century eponymous prison. In the 20th century these dual processes of individuation and massification of people led to authoritarian regimes and massive genocides. Foucault also stressed that science introduces powerful social norms which are internalized so that most people become self-policing. Those who do not and live outside of these boundaries can be identified, traced, and disciplined in hospitals, prisons, and asylums. Foucault's intellectual presence is found in many fields and is strong in the social sciences among specialists in cultural geography, discourse analysis, criminology, and the sociology of medicine.

"'Women' as the Subject of Feminism" is taken from Judith Butler's book Gender Trouble. Butler sees traditional, mainstream feminist theory and practice as straightjacketing women into traditional feminine roles. She invokes the sex/gender distinction and attributes fixity to both sex and gender. She writes, "If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders." Butler then argues that there is no reason to consider

gender binary and concludes that "When constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as well signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as a female one." With prior assumptions so discredited, the path is open to greater diversity in the meaning of gender and the range of sexual practice.

This last selection in the section is taken from Frantz Fanon's Toward the African Revolution, a book not as well known two other Fanon volumes, Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth. Nevertheless, in this selection, Fanon incisively addresses the issue of racism which he attributed to conquest and colonialism. In this unequal relationship between a conquering and a conquered people the latter come under a blistering attack in which all aspects of their culture and their psyches are denigrated, essentially forever. Nothing is spared, not spiritual beliefs, language, cuisine, couture, and other dimensions of material and non-material culture down to individual features of a person's demeanor. These attacks serve to inculcate feelings of inferiority among subaltern masses in colonized territories, and a common, though mistaken belief that if one sheds all aspects of one's past being and adopts all aspects of the externally and violently imposed non-indigenous culture and the demeanor of its denizens one will at long last gain freedom, acceptance, and peace. But this is not to be, Fanon argues, because unequal power begets unequal standing. As the system evolves and matures, however, native peoples see the value of their indigenous past and mold it into a force for struggle including struggles to overthrow the colonial system.

Each of these readings, by examining the unspoken assumptions through which power is organized, conveys a sense of how social institutions organize power in the interests of dominant groups. These readings provide the theoretical foundation with which to understand the more empirical works in the remaining sections of the book including readings on agency and resistance by subordinate social groups.

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Chapter 3

The Fetishism of Commodities

Karl Marx

A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties. So far as it is a value in use, there is nothing mysterious about it, whether we consider it from the point of view that by its properties it is capable of satisfying human wants, or from the point that those properties are the product of human labour. It is as clear as noon-day, that man, by his industry, changes the forms of the materials furnished by Nature, in such a way as to make them useful to him. The form of wood, for instance, is altered, by making a table out of it. Yet, for all that, the table continues to be that common, every-day thing, wood. But, so soon as it steps forth as a commodity, it is changed into something transcendent. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, far more wonderful than "table-turning" ever was.

The mystical character of commodities does not originate, therefore, in their use-value. Just as little does it proceed from the nature of the determining factors of value. For, in the first place, however varied the useful kinds of labour, or productive activities, may be, it is a physiological fact, that they are functions of the human organism, and that each such function, whatever may be its nature or form, is essentially the expenditure of human brain, nerves, muscles, &c. Secondly, with regard to that which forms the ground-work for the quantitative determination of value, namely, the duration of that expenditure, or the quantity of labour, it is quite clear that there is a palpable difference between its quantity and quality. In all states of society, the labour-time that it costs to produce the means of subsistence, must necessarily be an object of interest to mankind, though not of equal interest in different stages of development. And lastly, from the moment that men in any way work for one another, their labour assumes a social form.

Whence, then, arises the enigmatical character of the product of labour, so soon as it assumes the form of commodities? Clearly from this form itself. The equality of all sorts of human labour is expressed objectively by their products all being equally values; the measure of the expenditure of labour-power by the duration of that expenditure, takes the form of the quantity of value of the products of labour; and finally, the mutual relations of the producers, within which the social character of their labour affirms itself, takes the form of a social relation between the products.

A commodity is therefore a mysterious thing, simply because in it the social character of men's labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour. This is the reason why the products of labour become commodities, social things whose qualities are at the same time perceptible and imperceptible by the senses. In

the same way the light from an object is perceived by us not as the subjective excitation of our optic nerve, but as the objective form of something outside the eye itself. But, in the act of seeing, there is at all events, an actual passage of light from one thing to another, from the external object to the eye. There is a physical relation between physical things. But it is different with commodities. There, the existence of the things *quâ* commodities, and the value-relation between the products of labour which stamps them as commodities, have absolutely no connexion with their physical properties and with the material relations arising therefrom. There it is a definite social relation between men, that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things. In order, therefore to find an analogy, we must have recourse to the mist-enveloped regions of the religious world. In that world the productions of the human brain appear as independent beings endowed with life, and entering into relation both with one another and the human race. So it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. This I call the Fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour, so soon as they are produced as commodities, and which is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities.

This Fetishism of commodities has its origin, as the foregoing analysis has already shown, in the peculiar social character of the labour that produces them.

Chapter 4

The New Forms of Control

Herbert Marcuse

A comfortable, smooth, reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails in advanced industrial civilization, a token of technical progress. Indeed, what could be more rational than the suppression of individuality in the mechanization of socially necessary but painful performances; the concentration of individual enterprises in more effective, more productive corporations; the regulation of free competition among unequally equipped economic subjects; the curtailment of prerogatives and national sovereignties which impede the international organization of resources. That this technological order also involves a political and intellectual coordination may be a regrettable and yet promising development.

The rights and liberties which were such vital factors in the origins and earlier stages of industrial society yield to a higher stage of this society: they are losing their traditional rationale and content. Freedom of thought, speech, and conscience were—just as free enterprise, which they served to promote and protect—essentially *critical* ideas, designed to replace an obsolescent material and intellectual culture by a more productive and rational one. Once institutionalized, these rights and liberties shared the fate of the society of which they had become an integral part. The achievement cancels the premises.

To the degree to which freedom from want, the concrete substance of all freedom, is becoming a real possibility, the liberties which pertain to a state of lower productivity are losing their former content. Independence of thought, autonomy, and the right to political opposition are being deprived of their basic critical function in a society which seems increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individuals through the way in which it is organized. Such a society may justly demand acceptance of its principles and institutions, and reduce the opposition to the discussion and promotion of alternative policies *within* the status quo. In this respect, it seems to make little difference whether the increasing satisfaction of needs is accomplished by an authoritarian or a non-authoritarian system. Under the conditions of a rising standard of living, non-conformity with the system itself appears to be socially useless, and the more so when it entails tangible economic and political disadvantages and threatens the smooth operation of the whole. Indeed, at least in so far as the necessities of life are involved, there seems to be no reason why the production and distribution of goods and services should proceed through the competitive concurrence of individual liberties.

Freedom of enterprise was from the beginning not altogether a blessing. As the liberty to work or to starve, it spelled toil, insecurity, and fear for the vast majority of the population. If the individual were no longer compelled to prove himself on the market, as a free economic subject, the disappearance of this kind of freedom would be one of the greatest achievements

of civilization. The technological processes of mechanization and standardization might release individual energy into a yet uncharted realm of freedom beyond necessity. The very structure of human existence would be altered; the individual would be liberated from the work world's imposing upon him alien needs and alien possibilities. The individual would be free to exert autonomy over a life that would be his own. If the productive apparatus could be organized and directed toward the satisfaction of the vital needs, its control might well be centralized; such control would not prevent individual autonomy, but render it possible.

This is a goal within the capabilities of advanced industrial civilization, the "end" of technological rationality. In actual fact, however, the contrary trend operates: the apparatus imposes its economic and political requirements for defense and expansion on labor time and free time, on the material and intellectual culture. By virtue of the way it has organized its technological base, contemporary industrial society tends to be totalitarian. For "totalitarian" is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a nonterroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests. It thus precludes the emergence of an effective opposition against the whole. Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc.

Today political power asserts itself through its power over the machine process and over the technical organization of the apparatus. The government of advanced and advancing industrial societies can maintain and secure itself only when it succeeds in mobilizing, organizing, and exploiting the technical, scientific, and mechanical productivity available to industrial civilization. And this productivity mobilizes society as a whole, above and beyond any particular individual or group interests. The brute fact that the machine's physical (only physical?) power surpasses that of the individual, and of any particular group of individuals, makes the machine the most effective political instrument in any society whose basic organization is that of the machine process. But the political trend may be reversed; essentially the power of the machine is only the stored-up and projected power of man. To the extent to which the work world is conceived of as a machine and mechanized accordingly, it becomes the *potential* basis of a new freedom for man.

Contemporary industrial civilization demonstrates that it has reached the stage at which "the free society" can no longer be adequately defined in the traditional terms of economic, political, and intellectual liberties, not because these liberties have become insignificant, but because they are too significant to be confined within the traditional forms. New modes of realization are needed, corresponding to the new capabilities of society.

Such new modes can be indicated only in negative terms because they would amount to the negation of the prevailing modes. Thus economic freedom would mean freedom *from* the economy—from being controlled by economic forces and relationships; freedom from the daily struggle for existence, from earning a living. Political freedom would mean liberation of the individuals *from* politics over which they have no effective control. Similarly, intellectual freedom would mean the restoration of individual thought now absorbed by mass communication and indoctrination, abolition of "public opinion" together with its makers. The unrealistic sound of these propositions is indicative, not of their utopian character, but of the strength of the forces which prevent their realization. The most effective and enduring form of warfare against liberation is the implanting of material and intellectual needs that perpetuate obsolete forms of the struggle for existence.

The intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond the biological level, have always been preconditioned. Whether or not the possibility of doing or

leaving, enjoying or destroying, possessing or rejecting something is seized as a *need* depends on whether or not it can be seen as desirable and necessary for the prevailing societal institutions and interests. In this sense, human needs are historical needs and, to the extent to which the society demands the repressive development of the individual, his needs themselves and their claim for satisfaction are subject to overriding critical standards.

We may distinguish both true and false needs. "False" are those which are superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests in his repression: the needs which perpetuate toil, aggressiveness, misery, and injustice. Their satisfaction might be most gratifying to the individual, but this happiness is not a condition which has to be maintained and protected if it serves to arrest the development of the ability (his own and others) to recognize the disease of the whole and grasp the chances of curing the disease. The result then is euphoria in unhappiness. Most of the prevailing needs to relax, to have fun, to behave and consume in accordance with the advertisements, to love and hate what others love and hate, belong to this category of false needs.

Such needs have a societal content and function which are determined by external powers over which the individual has no control; the development and satisfaction of these needs is heteronomous. No matter how much such needs may have become the individual's own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning—products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression.

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In the last analysis, the question of what are true and false needs must be answered by the individuals themselves, but only in the last analysis; that is, if and when they are free to give their own answer. As long as they are kept incapable of being autonomous, as long as they are indoctrinated and manipulated (down to their very instincts), their answer to this question cannot be taken as their own. By the same token, however, no tribunal can justly arrogate to itself the right to decide which needs should be developed and satisfied. Any such tribunal is reprehensible, although our revulsion does not do away with the question: how can the people who have been the object of effective and productive domination by themselves create the conditions of freedom?

The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive administration of society becomes, the more unimaginable the means and ways by which the administered individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation. To be sure, to impose Reason upon an entire society is a paradoxical and scandalous idea—although one might dispute the righteousness of a society which ridicules this idea while making its own population into objects of total administration. All liberation depends on the consciousness of servitude, and the emergence of this consciousness is always hampered by the predominance of needs and satisfactions which, to a great extent, have become the individual's own. The process always replaces one system of preconditioning by another; the optimal goal is the replacement of false needs by true ones, the abandonment of repressive satisfaction.

The distinguishing feature of advanced industrial society is its effective suffocation of those needs which demand liberation—liberation also from that which is tolerable and rewarding and comfortable—while it sustains and absolves the destructive power and repressive function of the affluent society. Here, the social controls exact the overwhelming need for the production and consumption of waste; the need for stupefying work where it is no longer a real necessity; the need for modes of relaxation which soothe and prolong this

stupefication; the need for maintaining such deceptive liberties as free competition at administered prices, a free press which censors itself, free choice between brands and gadgets.

Under the rule of a repressive whole, liberty can be made into a powerful instrument of domination. The range of choice open to the individual is not the decisive factor in determining the degree of human freedom, but *what* can be chosen and what *is* chosen by the individual. The criterion for free choice can never be an absolute one, but neither is it entirely relative. Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear—that is, if they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

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We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed, and social control is anchored in the new needs which it has produced.

The prevailing forms of social control are technological in a new sense. To be sure, the technical structure and efficacy of the productive and destructive apparatus has been a major instrumentality for subjecting the population to the established social division of labor throughout the modern period. Moreover, such integration has always been accompanied by more obvious forms of compulsion: loss of livelihood, the administration of justice, the police, the armed forces. It still is. But in the contemporary period, the technological controls appear to be the very embodiment of Reason for the benefit of all social groups and interests—to such an extent that all contradiction seems irrational and all counteraction impossible.

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In this process, the "inner" dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take root is whittled down. The loss of this dimension, in which the power of negative thinking—the critical power of Reason—is at home, is the ideological counterpart to the very material process in which advanced industrial society silences and reconciles the opposition. The impact of progress turns Reason into submission to the facts of life, and to the dynamic capability of producing more and bigger facts of the same sort of life. The efficiency of the system blunts the individuals' recognition that it contains no facts which do not communicate the repressive power of the whole. If the individuals find themselves in the things which shape their life, they do so, not by giving, but by accepting the law of things—not the law of physics but the law of their society.

I have just suggested that the concept of alienation seems to become questionable when the individuals identify themselves with the existence which is imposed upon them and have in it their own development and satisfaction. This identification is not illusion but reality. However, the reality constitutes a more progressive stage of alienation. The latter has become entirely objective; the subject which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence. There is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms. The achievements of

progress defy ideological indictment as well as justification; before their tribunal, the "false consciousness" of their rationality becomes the true consciousness.

This absorption of ideology into reality does not, however, signify the "end of ideology." On the contrary, in a specific sense advanced industrial culture is *more* ideological than its predecessor, inasmuch as today the ideology is in the process of production itself. In a provocative form, this proposition reveals the political aspects of the prevailing technological rationality. The productive apparatus and the goods and services which it produces "sell" or impose the social system as a whole. The means of mass transportation and communication, the commodities of lodging, food, and clothing, the irresistible output of the entertainment and information industry carry with them prescribed attitudes and habits, certain intellectual and emotional reactions which bind the consumers more or less pleasantly to the producers and, through the latter, to the whole. The products indoctrinate and manipulate; they promote a false consciousness which is immune against its falsehood. And as these beneficial products become available to more individuals in more social classes, the indoctrination they carry ceases to be publicity; it becomes a way of life. It is a good way of life—much better than before—and as a good way of life, it militates against qualitative change. Thus emerges a pattern of *one-dimensional thought and behavior* in which ideas, aspirations, and objectives that, by their content, transcend the established universe of discourse and action are either repelled or reduced to terms of this universe. They are redefined by the rationality of the given system and of its quantitative extension.

Chapter 5

Hegemony

Antonio Gramsci

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called "civil society," that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private," and that of "political society" or "the State." These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of "hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of "direct domination" or command exercised through the State and "juridical" government. The functions in question are precisely organisational and connective. The intellectuals are the dominant group's "deputies" exercising the subaltern functions of social hegemony and political government. These comprise:

1. The "spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is "historically" caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.
2. The apparatus of state coercive power which "legally" enforces discipline on those groups who do not "consent" either actively or passively. This apparatus is, however, constituted for the whole of society in anticipation of moments of crisis of command and direction when spontaneous consent has failed.

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In my opinion, the most reasonable and concrete thing that can be said about the ethical State, the cultural State, is this: every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular culture and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense: but in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end—initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes.

Government with the consent of the governed—but with this consent organised, and not generic and vague as it is expressed in the instant of elections. The State does have and request consent, but it also "educates" this consent, by means of the political and syndical associations; these, however, are private organisms, left to the private initiative of the ruling class.

* * * *

The revolution which the bourgeois class has brought into the conception of law, and hence into the function of the State, consists especially in the will to conform (hence ethicity of the

law and of the State). The previous ruling classes were essentially conservative in the sense that they did not tend to construct an organic passage from the other classes into their own, i.e. to enlarge their class sphere "technically" and ideologically: their conception was that of a closed caste. The bourgeois class poses itself as an organism in continuous movement, capable of absorbing the entire society, assimilating it to its own cultural and economic level. The entire function of the State has been transformed; the State has become an "educator," etc.

Chapter 6

The Body of the Condemned

Michel Foucault

Historians long ago began to write the history of the body. They have studied the body in the field of historical demography or pathology; they have considered it as the seat of needs and appetites, as the locus of physiological processes and metabolisms, as a target for the attacks of germs or viruses; they have shown to what extent historical processes were involved in what might seem to be the purely biological base of existence; and what place should be given in the history of society to biological "events" such as the circulation of bacilli, or the extension of the life-span. But the body is also directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs. This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labor power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated, and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. This subjection is not only obtained by the instruments of violence or ideology; it can also be direct, physical, pitting force against force, bearing on material elements, and yet without involving violence; it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order. That is to say, there may be a "knowledge" of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body. Of course, this technology is diffuse, rarely formulated in continuous, systematic discourse; it is often made up of bits and pieces; it implements a disparate set of tools or methods. In spite of the coherence of its results, it is generally no more than a multiform instrumentation. Moreover, it cannot be localized in a particular type of institution or state apparatus. For they have recourse to it; they use, select, or impose certain of its methods. But, in its mechanisms and its effects, it is situated at quite a different level. What the apparatuses and institutions operate is, in a sense, a micro-physics of power, whose field of validity is situated in a sense between these great functionings and the bodies themselves with their materiality and their forces.

Now, the study of this micro-physics presupposes that the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to "appropriation," but to dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, functionings; that one should decipher in it a network of relations; constantly in tension, in activity, rather than a privilege that one might possess; that one should take as its model a perpetual battle rather than a contract regulating a transaction or the conquest of a territory. In short this power is exercised rather than possessed; it is not the "privilege," acquired or preserved, of

the dominant class, but the overall effect of its strategic positions—an effect that is manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated. Furthermore, this power is not exercised simply as an obligation or a prohibition on those who "do not have it"; it invests them, is transmitted by them and through them; it exerts pressure upon them, just as they themselves, in their struggle against it, resist the grip it has on them. This means that these relations go right down into the depths of society, that they are not localized in the relations between the state and its citizens or on the frontier between classes, and that they do not merely reproduce, at the level of individuals, bodies, gestures, and behavior, the general form of the law or government. Lastly, they are not univocal; they define innumerable points of confrontation, focuses of instability, each of which has its own risks of conflict, of struggles, and of an at least temporary inversion of the power relations. The overthrow of these "micro-powers" does not, then, obey the law of all or nothing; it is not acquired once and for all by a new control of the apparatuses nor by a new functioning or a destruction of the institutions; on the other hand, none of its localized episodes may be inscribed in history except by the effects that it induces on the entire network in which it is caught up.

Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands, and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These "power–knowledge relations" are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known, and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power–knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power–knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it, and of which it is made up, that determine the forms and possible domains of knowledge.

Chapter 7

Toward the African Revolution

Frantz Fanon

The unilaterally decreed normative value of certain cultures deserves our careful attention. One of the paradoxes immediately encountered is the rebound of egocentric, sociocentric definitions.

There is first affirmed the existence of human groups having no culture; then of a hierarchy of cultures; and finally, the concept of cultural relativity.

We have here the whole range from overall negation to singular and specific recognition. It is precisely this fragmented and bloody history that we must sketch on the level of cultural anthropology.

There are, we may say, certain constellations of institutions, established by particular men, in the framework of precise geographical areas, which at a given moment have undergone a direct and sudden assault of different cultural patterns. The technical, generally advanced development of the social group that has thus appeared enables it to set up an organized domination. The enterprise of deculturation turns out to be the negative of a more gigantic work of economic, and even biological, enslavement.

The doctrine of cultural hierarchy is thus but one aspect of a systematized hierarchization implacably pursued.

The modern theory of the absence of cortical integration of colonial peoples is the anatomic-physiological counterpart of this doctrine. The apparition of racism is not fundamentally determining. Racism is not the whole but the most visible, the most day-to-day and, not to mince matters, the crudest element of a given structure.

To study the relations of racism and culture is to raise the question of their reciprocal action. If culture is the combination of motor and mental behavior patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow-man, it can be said that racism is indeed a cultural element. There are thus cultures with racism and cultures without racism.

This precise cultural element, however, has not become encysted. Racism has not managed to harden. It has had to renew itself, to adapt itself, to change its appearance. It has had to undergo the fate of the cultural whole that informed it.

The vulgar, primitive, over-simple racism purported to find in biology—the Scriptures having proved insufficient—the material basis of the doctrine. It would be tedious to recall the efforts then undertaken: the comparative form of the skulls, the quantity and the configuration of the folds of the brain, the characteristics of the cell layers of the cortex, the dimensions of the vertebrae, the microscopic appearance of the epiderm, etc. . . .

These old-fashioned positions tend in any case to disappear. This racism that aspires to be rational, individual, genotypically and phenotypically determined, becomes transformed into cultural racism. The object of racism is no longer the individual man but a certain form of existing. At the extreme, such terms as "message" and "cultural style" are resorted to.

"Occidental values" oddly blend with the already famous appeal to the fight of the "cross against the crescent."

The morphological equation, to be sure, has not totally disappeared, but events of the past thirty years have shaken the most solidly anchored convictions, upset the checkerboard, restructured a great number of relationships.

The memory of Nazism, the common wretchedness of different men, the common enslavement of extensive social groups, the apparition of "European colonies," in other words the institution of a colonial system in the very heart of Europe, the growing awareness of workers in the colonizing and racist countries, the evolution of techniques, all this has deeply modified the problem and the manner of approaching it.

We must look for the consequences of this racism on the cultural level.

Racism, as we have seen, is only one element of a vaster whole: that of the systematized oppression of a people. How does an oppressing people behave? Here we rediscover constants.

We witness the destruction of cultural values, of ways of life. Language, dress, techniques, are devalorized. How can one account for this constant? Psychologists, who tend to explain everything by movements of the psyche, claim to discover this behavior on the level of contacts between individuals: the criticism of an original hat, of a way of speaking, of walking . . .

Such attempts deliberately leave out of account the special character of the colonial situation. In reality the nations that undertake a colonial war have no concern for the confrontation of cultures. War is a gigantic business and every approach must be governed by this datum. The enslavement, in the strictest sense, of the native population is the prime necessity.

For this its systems of reference have to be broken. Expropriation, spoliation, raids, objective murder, are matched by the sacking of cultural patterns, or at least condition such sacking. The social panorama is destructured; values are flaunted, crushed, emptied.

The lines of force, having crumbled, no longer give direction. In their stead a new system of values is imposed, not proposed but affirmed, by the heavy weight of cannons and sabers.

The setting up of the colonial system does not of itself bring about the death of the native culture. Historic observation reveals, on the contrary, that the aim sought is rather a continued agony than a total disappearance of the pre-existing culture. This culture, once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression. Both present and mummified, it testifies against its members. It defines them in fact without appeal.

Thus we witness the setting up of archaic, inert institutions, functioning under the oppressor's supervision and patterned like a caricature of formerly fertile institutions . . .

The constantly affirmed concern with "respecting the culture of the native populations" accordingly does not signify taking into consideration the values borne by the culture, incarnated by men. Rather, this behavior betrays a determination to objectify, to confine, to imprison, to harden. Phrases such as "I know them," "that's the way they are," show this maximum objectification successfully achieved. I can think of gestures and thoughts that define these men.

Exoticism is one of the forms of this simplification. It allows no cultural confrontation. There is on the one hand a culture in which qualities of dynamism, of growth, of depth can be recognized. As against this, we find characteristics, curiosities, things, never a structure.

Thus in an initial phase the occupant establishes his domination, massively affirms his superiority. The social group, militarily and economically subjugated, is dehumanized in accordance with a polydimensional method.

Exploitation, tortures, raids, racism, collective liquidations, rational oppression take turns at different levels in order literally to make of the native an object in the hands of the occupying nation.

Progressively, however, the evolution of techniques of production, the industrialization, limited though it is, of the subjugated countries, the increasingly necessary existence of collaborators, impose a new attitude upon the occupant. The complexity of the means of production, the evolution of economic relations inevitably involving the evolution of ideologies, unbalance the system. Vulgar racism in its biological form corresponds to the period of crude exploitation of man's arms and legs. The perfecting of the means of production inevitably brings about the camouflage of the techniques by which man is exploited, hence of the forms of racism.

It is therefore not as a result of the evolution of people's minds that racism loses its virulence. No inner revolution can explain this necessity for racism to seek more subtle forms, to evolve. On all sides men become free, putting an end to the lethargy to which oppression and racism had condemned them.

In the very heart of the "civilized nations" the workers finally discover that the exploitation of man, at the root of a system, assumes different faces. At this stage racism no longer dares appear without disguise. It is unsure of itself. In an ever greater number of circumstances the racist takes to cover. He who claimed to "sense," to "see through" those others, finds himself to be a target, looked at, judged. The racist's purpose has become a purpose haunted by bad conscience. He can find salvation only in a passion-driven commitment such as is found in certain psychoses.

Racism is never a super-added element discovered by chance in the course of the investigation of the cultural data of a group. The social constellation, the cultural whole, are deeply modified by the existence of racism.

For a time it looked as though racism had disappeared. This soul-soothing, unreal impression was simply the consequence of the evolution of forms of exploitation. Psychologists spoke of a prejudice having become unconscious. The truth is that the rigor of the system made the daily affirmation of a superiority superfluous. The need to appeal to various degrees of approval and support, to the native's cooperation, modified relations in a less crude, more subtle, more "cultivated" direction. It was not rare, in fact, to see a "democratic and humane" ideology at this stage. The commercial undertaking of enslavement, of cultural destruction, progressively gave way to a verbal mystification.

Racism bloats and disfigures the face of the culture that practices it. Literature, the plastic arts, songs for shopgirls, proverbs, habits, patterns, whether they set out to attack it or to vulgarize it, restore racism. This means that a social group, a country, a civilization, cannot be unconsciously racist.

We say once again that racism is not an accidental discovery. It is not a hidden, dissimulated element. No superhuman efforts are needed to bring it out.

Racism stares one in the face for it so happens that it belongs in a characteristic whole: that of the shameless exploitation of one group of men by another which has reached a higher stage of technical development. This is why military and economic oppression generally precedes, makes possible, and legitimizes racism.

The habit of considering racism as a mental quirk, as a psychological flaw, must be abandoned.

But the men who are a prey to racism, the enslaved, exploited, weakened social group—how do they behave? What are their defense mechanisms?

What attitudes do we discover here?

In an initial phase we have seen the occupying power legitimizing its domination by scientific arguments, the "inferior race" being denied on the basis of race. Because no other solution is left it, the racialized social group tries to imitate the oppressor and thereby to deracialize itself. The "inferior race" denies itself as a different race. It shares with the "superior race" the convictions, doctrines, and other attitudes concerning it.

Having witnessed the liquidation of its systems of reference, the collapse of its cultural patterns, the native can only recognize with the occupant that "God is not on his side." The oppressor, through the inclusive and frightening character of his authority, manages to impose on the native new ways of seeing, and in particular a pejorative judgment with respect to his original forms of existing.

This event, which is commonly designated as alienation, is naturally very important. It is found in the official texts under the name of assimilation.

Now this alienation is never wholly successful. Whether or not it is because the oppressor quantitatively and qualitatively limits the evolution, unforeseen, disparate phenomena manifest themselves.

The inferiorized group had admitted, since the force of reasoning was implacable, that its misfortunes resulted directly from its racial and cultural characteristics.

Guilt and inferority are the usual consequences of this dialectic. The oppressed then tries to escape these, on the one hand by proclaiming his total and unconditional adoption of the new cultural models, and on the other, by pronouncing an irreversible condemnation of his own cultural style.

Yet the necessity that the oppressor encounters at a given point to dissimulate the forms of exploitation does not lead to the disappearance of this exploitation. The more elaborate, less crude economic relations require a daily coating, but the alienation at this level remains frightful.

Having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behavior, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed *flings himself* upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man.

Developing his technical knowledge in contact with more and more perfected machines, entering into the dynamic circuit of industrial production, meeting men from remote regions in the framework of the concentration of capital, that is to say, on the job, discovering the assembly line, the team, production "time," in other words yield per hour, the oppressed is shocked to find that he continues to be the object of racism and contempt.

It is not possible to enslave men without logically making them inferior through and through. And racism is only the emotional, affective, sometimes intellectual explanation of this inferiorization.

The racist in a culture with racism is therefore normal. He has achieved a perfect harmony of economic relations and ideology. The idea that one forms of man, to be sure, is never totally dependent on economic relations, in other words—and this must not be forgotten—on relations existing historically and geographically among men and groups. An ever greater number of members belonging to racist societies are taking a position. They are dedicating themselves to a world in which racism would be impossible. But everyone is not up to this kind of objectivity, this abstraction, this solemn commitment. One cannot with impunity require of a man that he be against "the prejudices of his group."

And, we repeat, every colonialist group is racist.

"Acculturized" and deculturized at one and the same time, the oppressed continues to come up against racism. He finds this sequel illogical, what he has left behind him inexplicable, without motive, incorrect. His knowledge, the appropriation of precise and

complicated techniques, sometimes his intellectual superiority as compared to a great number of racists, lead him to qualify the racist world as passion-charged. He perceives that the racist atmosphere impregnates all the elements of the social life. The sense of an overwhelming injustice is correspondingly very strong. Forgetting racism as a consequence, one concentrates on racism as cause. Campaigns of deintoxication are launched. Appeal is made to the sense of humanity, to love, to respect for the supreme values . . .

Race prejudice in fact obeys a flawless logic. A country that lives, draws its substance from the exploitation of other peoples, makes those peoples inferior. Race prejudice applied to those peoples is normal.

Racism is therefore not a constant of the human spirit.

The struggle of the inferiorized is situated on a markedly more human level. The perspectives are radically new. The opposition is the henceforth classical one of the struggles of conquest and of liberation.

In the course of struggle the dominating nation tries to revive racist arguments but the elaboration of racism proves more and more ineffective. There is talk of fanaticism, of primitive attitudes in the face of death, but once again the now crumbling mechanism no longer responds. Those who were once unbudgeable, the constitutional cowards, the timid, the eternally inferiorized, stiffen and emerge bristling.

The occupant is bewildered.

The end of race prejudice begins with a sudden incomprehension.

The occupant's spasmed and rigid culture, now liberated, opens at last to the culture of people who have really become brothers. The two cultures can affront each other, enrich each other.

In conclusion, universality resides in this decision to recognize and accept the reciprocal relativism of different cultures, once the colonial status is irreversibly excluded.

Note

Text of Frantz Fanon's speech before the First Congress of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris, September 1956. Published in the Special Issue of *Présence Africaine,* June–November, 1956.

Chapter 8

"Women" as The Subject of Feminism

Judith Butler

For the most part, feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity, understood through the category of women, who not only initiates feminist interests and goals within discourse, but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is pursued. But *politics* and *representation* are controversial terms. On the one hand, *representation* serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women. For feminist theory, the development of a language that fully or adequately represents women has seemed necessary to foster the political visibility of women. This has seemed obviously important considering the pervasive cultural condition in which women's lives were either misrepresented or not represented at all.

Recently, this prevailing conception of the relation between feminist theory and politics has come under challenge from within feminist discourse. The very subject of women is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms. There is a great deal of material that not only questions the viability of "the subject" as the ultimate candidate for representation or, indeed, liberation, but there is very little agreement after all on what it is that constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of women. . . .

Rather than a stable signifier that commands the assent of those whom it purports to describe and represent, *women,* even in the plural, has become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety. As Denise Riley's title suggests, *Am I That Name?* is a question produced by the very possibility of the name's multiple significations.[1] If one "is" a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered "person" transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. . . .

Is the construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations? And is not such a reification precisely contrary to feminist aims? To what extent does the category of women achieve stability and coherence only in the context of the heterosexual matrix?[2] If a stable notion of gender no longer proves to be the foundational premise of feminist politics, perhaps a new sort of feminist politics is now desirable to contest the very reifications of gender and identity, one that will take the variable construction of identity as both a methodological and normative prerequisite, if not a political goal. . . .

I. THE COMPULSORY ORDER OF SEX/GENDER/DESIRE

Although the unproblematic unity of "women" is often invoked to construct a solidarity of identity, a split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender. Originally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex.[3]

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution (which will become a question), there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two.[4] The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one.

This radical splitting of the gendered subject poses yet another set of problems. Can we refer to a "given" sex or a "given" gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender is given, through what means? And what is "sex" anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal, and how is a feminist critic to assess the scientific discourses which purport to establish such "facts" for us?[5] Does sex have a history?[6] Does each sex have a different history, or histories? Is there a history of how the duality of sex was established, a genealogy that might expose the binary options as a variable construction? Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.[7]

It would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category. Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive" prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts. . . .

II. GENDER: THE CIRCULAR RUINS OF CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

Is there "a" gender which persons are said to *have,* or is it an essential attribute that a person is said to *be,* as implied in the question "What gender are you?" When feminist theorists claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed, what is the manner or mechanism of this construction? If gender is constructed, could it be

constructed differently, or does its constructedness imply some form of social determinism, foreclosing the possibility of agency and transformation? Does "construction" suggest that certain laws generate gender differences along universal axes of sexual difference? How and where does the construction of gender take place? What sense can we make of a construction that cannot assume a human constructor prior to that construction? On some accounts, the notion that gender is constructed suggests a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies, where those bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law. When the relevant "culture" that "constructs" gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny.

On the other hand, Simone de Beauvoir suggests in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one."[8] For Beauvoir, gender is "constructed," but implied in her formulation is an agent, a *cogito,* who somehow takes on or appropriates that gender and could, in principle, take on some other gender. Is gender as variable and volitional as Beauvoir's account seems to suggest? Can "construction" in such a case be reduced to a form of choice? Beauvoir is clear that one "becomes" a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. And clearly, the compulsion does not come from "sex." There is nothing in her account that guarantees that the "one" who becomes a woman is necessarily female. If "the body is a situation,"[9] as she claims, there is no recourse to a body that has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings; hence, sex could not qualify as a prediscursive anatomical facticity. Indeed, sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along.[10]

The controversy over the meaning of *construction* appears to founder on the conventional philosophical polarity between free will and determinism. As a consequence, one might reasonably suspect that some common linguistic restriction on thought both forms and limits the terms of the debate. Within those terms, "the body" appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself. In either case, the body is figured as a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related. But "the body" is itself a construction, as are the myriad "bodies" that constitute the domain of gendered subjects. Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender; the question then emerges: To what extent does the body *come into being* in and through the mark(s) of gender? How do we reconceive the body no longer as a passive medium or instrument awaiting the enlivening capacity of a distinctly immaterial will?[11]

Whether gender or sex is fixed or free is a function of a discourse which, it will be suggested, seeks to set certain limits to analysis or to safeguard certain tenets of humanism as pre-suppositional to any analysis of gender. The locus of intractability, whether in "sex" or "gender" or in the very meaning of "construction," provides a clue to what cultural possibilities can and cannot become mobilized through any further analysis. The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture. This is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender.

Notes

1. See Denise Riley, *Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History* (New York: Macmillan, 1988).
2. I use the term *heterosexual matrix* throughout the text to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized. I am drawing from Monique Wittig's notion of the "heterosexual contract" and, to a lesser extent, on Adrienne Rich's notion of "compulsory heterosexuality" to characterize a hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality.
3. For a discussion of the sex/gender distinction in structuralist anthropology and feminist appropriations and criticisms of that formulation, see chapter 2, section i, "Structuralism's Critical Exchange."
4. For an interesting study of the *berdache* and multiple-gender arrangements in Native American cultures, see Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988). See also, Sherry B. Ortner and Harriet Whitehead, eds., *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981). For a politically sensitive and provocative analysis of the *berdache,* transsexuals, and the contingency of gender dichotomies, see Suzanne J. Kessler and Wendy McKenna, *Gender: An Ethnomethodological Approach* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
5. A great deal of feminist research has been conducted within the fields of biology and the history of science that assess the political interests inherent in the various discriminatory procedures that establish the scientific basis for sex. See Ruth Hubbard and Marian Lowe, eds., *Genes and Gender*, vols. 1 and 2 (New York: Gordian Press, 1978, 1979); the two issues on feminism and science of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (Fall 1987), and Vol. 3, No. 1, (Spring 1988), and especially The Biology and Gender Study Group, "The Importance of Feminist Critique for Contemporary Cell Biology" in this last issue (Spring 1988); Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); Donna Haraway, "In the Beginning was the Word: The Genesis of Biological Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1981), Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions* (New York: Routledge, 1989); Sandra Harding and Jean F. O'Barr, *Sex and Scientific Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Myths of Gender: Biological Theories About Women and Men* (New York: Norton, 1979).
6. Clearly Foucault's *History of Sexuality* offers one way to rethink the history of "sex" within a given modern Eurocentric context. For a more detailed consideration, see Thomas Laqueur and Catherine Gallagher, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), originally published as an issue of *Representations*, No. 14, (Spring 1986).
7. See my "Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig, Foucault," in *Feminism as Critique* eds., Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell (Basil Blackwell, dist. by University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
8. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (New York: Vintage, 1973), p. 301.
9. Ibid., p. 38.
10. See my "Sex and Gender in Beauvoir's *Second Sex,*" *Yale French Studies, Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century*, No. 72 (Winter 1986).
11. Note the extent to which phenomenological theories such as Sartre's, Merleau-Ponty's, and Beauvoir's tend to use the term *embodiment*. Drawn as it is from theological contexts, the term tends to figure "the" body as a mode of incarnation and, hence, to preserve the external and dualistic relationship between a signifying immateriality and the materiality of the body itself.

Section II

The State

Theory

In Western political theory, the state is seen as the representative of the common good. The writings of the early social contract theorists, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke, present the state as a neutral arbiter of conflicting individual interests, one that is necessary to ensure social peace and order (Carnoy 1984; Held 1987). More contemporary theorists such as Joseph Schumpeter and Robert Dahl make a similar argument. For Schumpeter, citizens (who, you will recall, Schumpeter thought were incapable of direct participation in politics) choose legislators to serve as representatives of the general will (Schumpeter 1976). For Dahl, the diversity of citizen interests, and the assumption that no one interest is consistently dominant, suggests that the state serves to mediate these differences and produce policy outcomes that take these interests into account (Dahl 1956). The writings in this section challenge this assumption, and instead argue that the state represents the interests of dominant groups. In doing so, critical theories of the state can be understood as specific applications of the theories of power discussed in the previous section.

Because "[Karl] Marx did not develop a single, coherent theory of politics and/or the State" (Carnoy 1984: 45), there has been considerable debate among critical theorists of the state. Hal Draper provides a concise statement of how Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels conceptualized the state. For Marx and Engels, the state emerges from the relations of production characteristic of a specific society. As such, the state does not represent the common interest, but rather the fundamental interests of the dominant class. The state is a coercive system of specialized institutions that, in class-dominated societies, separates out from the general body of society and protects the property relations that serve as the foundation of the power of the ruling class. The specific mechanisms by which the state acts as an instrument of the dominant class, however, are not clearly specified in their writing. We saw in the last section how, for Gramsci, the state serves as an educator, building consent for its rule among members of subordinate groups by granting concessions (such as the right to unionize, civil rights for African-Americans, etc.) in a strategic manner. We will see later on, in the section on war, genocide, and repression, how the repressive power of the state is used to preserve fundamental social relations.

This section leads off with Hal Draper's "The State as Superstructure." Draper was a lifelong Trotskyist writer and organizer who belonged to a number of political organizations over the course of his life (1914-1990). What was consistent in Draper's politics was his critique of the Soviet Union which he considered unfaithful to the teachings of Marx and Engels. While living and working in Berkeley in the 1960s Draper was an active participant in the Free Speech Movement based on the campus of the University of California Berkeley, and he mentored leading student activists such as Mario Savio. Draper's major scholarly work is Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution which was published in five volumes between 1977 and 1990. "The State as Superstructure," the selection re-printed here, is taken from

volume 1 of this work, and it provides a clear Marxist explanation of the organization and operation of the capitalist state.

G. William Domhoff who has been asking and answering the question "Who Rules America?" for over half a century argues that a power elite, by which he means a leadership group consisting of members of the social upper class, representatives from major corporations and financial institutions, and participants in the policy formation organizations constitutes a governing class. Domhoff's class dominance framework suggests that the state serves capital because its representatives are directly involved in the state. This involvement takes a number of forms, including serving as appointees to top government positions and participating in the social networks through which corporate-oriented policies are developed and implemented. This elite can be divided into a corporate-conservative coalition focused on tax cuts, patriotism, religion, and morality and a liberal-labor coalition seeking higher wages, steeper progressive taxes, and higher corporate taxes. Domhoff views the liberal-labor coalition's quest for government programs that employ the unemployed and ease the path to unionization as the key factor in shaping the corporate-conservative coalition's suspicion of the federal government because control of the labor market is at the core of its agenda.

Mimi Abramovitz also rejects the traditional concept of the state as a neutral representative of the common good, but her critique is based on a socialist feminist rather than a Marxist perspective. Indeed, she is critical of Marxism for what she sees as its inadequate analysis of gender. Abramovitz argues that the state is simultaneously capitalist and patriarchal, upholding both class and gender domination and mediating contradictions between the two. Thus, the state intervenes in family and gender relations to maintain the family's role as an institution that contributes to the reproduction of capitalism. Meanwhile, state regulation of women's domestic and market labor contributes to the reproduction of a patriarchal gender division of labor. Abramovitz also suggests that the contradictions between these two roles make the state a contested terrain in which subordinate groups can challenge what she calls "patriarchal capitalism."

Michael Omi and Howard Winant offer a valuable corrective to the end of history paradigm used by scholars and the media in their treatment of the Civil Rights Movement. Victories such as the desegregation of public facilities and the Voting Rights Act were seen as permanent features of a new liberal political landscape. But this conclusion has proven premature and dramatically off-base. As the authors demonstrate the 1965 Voting Rights Act was severely weakened in the 5-4 Shelby County v. Holder Supreme Court decision in 2013 with the conservatives in the majority. The narrow decision has since allowed states with histories of disenfranchisement to change voting laws and practices without previously mandated approval from the federal government. A significant number of states have enacted legislation and policies that make it much more difficult for minorities to cast ballots. The theory behind this is that for much of its colonial and national history the U.S. has been racially despotic, and the values and beliefs, as well as the large amounts of violence necessary to create and maintain such a system, are engrained in the culture and belief systems of many white Americans. The result is a tense and unstable racial "peace" that does not necessarily promise a just resolution.

In 2018 G. Wm. Domhoff and Eleven Other Authors published Studying the Power Elite: Fifty Years of Who Rules America? In the book's main essay Domhoff examines the Who Rules America? project from its beginnings in the 1960s onwards to this latest iteration. He catalogues the criticisms that have been made and explains how his on-going research has allowed him to reconcile them over time. His conclusion is that overall Who Rules America? offers the most complete and accurate analysis of who does, in fact, rule America. One of the eleven co-authors is Robert J.S. Ross, a long-time sociologist working at Clark University

in Worcester, MA. In "Domhoff, Mills, and Slow Power" Ross offers a valuable correction to C. Wright Mills' treatment of power. Because Mills saw power based in institutional structures--corporate, political, and military--power for him was fast. Heads of institutional structures give orders and ideally subordinates rush to carry them out. But in fact, there is also a world of slow power in which political figures and corporate leaders introduce programs into the public domain and promote them over lengthy periods of time, eventually getting them passed into law. Ross introduces this aspect of power that Mills did not consider.

Although critical debates about the nature of the state peaked during the 1970s and 1980s, they are still quite relevant today (see Aronowitz and Bratsis 2002). For decades conservatives have led an assault against "big government," but in fact the state has in many ways become stronger during this period. It has, for example, escalated its efforts to stigmatize poor people as lazy welfare cheats, thereby leading to the creation of a more restrictive and punitive set of welfare policies. It has also been more aggressive in efforts to undermine labor unions by refusing to enforce or strengthen existing labor laws, privatizing public services, and imposing cuts in wages and benefits to unionized public employees. Our discussion of war, genocide, and repression later in the book will examine the increasing significance of coercive state power in the context of the "war on terrorism" and the increasingly militarized and repressive criminal justice system. Finally, we will see how, despite the widespread argument that the state is decreasing in importance in the context of the global economy, the major capitalist states are in many ways in the driver's seat of globalization; the United States has long played a leadership role in multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and its refusal to accept other institutions such as the International Criminal Court effectively renders them moot. Failure to appreciate the continued significance of the state will be costly, not only in terms of the fullness of our sociological analysis but also in terms of our efforts to expand democracy and social equality.

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Chapter 9

The State as Superstructure

Hal Draper

The state, then, comes into existence insofar as the institutions needed to carry out the common functions of the society require, for their continued maintenance, the separation of the power of forcible coercion from the general body of society.

* * * *

The state is the institution, or complex of institutions, which bases itself on the availability of forcible coercion by special agencies of society in order to maintain the dominance of a ruling class, preserve existing property relations from basic change, and keep all other classes in subjection.

"In subjection" does not mean cowering under a whip—not necessarily and not usually. More generally it means also: in willing compliance, in passive acquiescence, or in ingrained dependence. The ruling class relies in the first place on its economic pressures:

> The possessing classes [wrote Engels] . . . keep the working class in servitude not only by the might of their wealth, by the simple exploitation of labor by capital, but also by the power of the state—by the army, the bureaucracy, the courts.[1]

Direct state measures are, to begin with, an auxiliary method, and in the end an *ultima ratio*.

Here is a summary which continues a passage from Engels cited above:

> The state . . . is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of keeping it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.[2]

In this sense, politics is concentrated economics: "the power of the state," wrote Marx, is "the concentrated and organized force of society"; in this sense the state is "the summing up of bourgeois society."[3] The relations it sums up "are *economic* before everything else."[4] It is "a reflection, in concentrated form, of the economic needs of the class controlling production," wrote Engels.[5] The "concentration" metaphor emphasizes the social essence of state

power but, as we shall see, cannot do equal justice to all its aspects. Marx suggested another metaphor: the state is "the political superstructure" which rests on the socioeconomic organization of society; the formalist, eyes bent only on the political forms, refuses to become acquainted with the "economic realities" that underlie those forms; but "All real progress in the writing of modern history has been effected by descending from the political surface into the depths of social life."[6,7] In modern history, says Engels, "the state—the political order—is the subordinate, and civil society—the realm of economic relations—the decisive element."[8]

Special Characteristics of the State

The new political institution, the state, differs from the primitive (protopolitical) organizing authorities of tribal communities in a number of important respects.

1. The state is a power over a given *territory* (thereby including the people in the territory), rather than over a kinship group of related people. The equation of a political structure with a given territory or slice of the earth was once an innovation.

The state had to be based on territory because of the rise of private property and the social consequences of this change. Consider the way in which Engels traces this process, in a little detail, in the specific case of Athens.[9] As new economic relations (slavery, exchange of products, money, and so on) disintegrated the old kinship social groups over a period of time, the very members of the kinship groups were scattered over the whole of Attica, instead of concentrating around their communally owned land. In the city of Athens itself, commercial interests mingled them all helter skelter. New occupations divided the population into new types of interest groups which had no relationship to the old kinship structure. The new slave class was outside the old structure altogether, as were also strangers and foreigners who settled in Athens for the new commercial purposes. Thus the old social structure based on kinship was progressively destroyed, and the new institutions developing to organize the new social relations could work only by taking people by where they lived, not by blood relationships.

Marx makes the further point that a state can scarcely arise as long as family units are (say) scattered singly through a forest area as among the old Germanic tribes. A certain amount of *urban* concentration is required to form the unity that corresponds to a state. In the old German case, there may indeed be a community formed by such rurally scattered family units connected by kinship ties; but while this community structure may serve to unify them, it does not turn them into such a unity. In Marx's words:

> The *community* therefore appears as a *unification,* not as a *union*; as a unification in which the owners of land form independent subjects, not as a unity. Hence the community does not exist "in fact" as a *state,* a *state entity,* as in antiquity, because it does not exist as a *town*. In order for the community to come into actual existence, the free landowners must hold an *assembly,* whereas—for example in Rome—it *exists* apart from such assemblies in the very existence of the *town itself* and the officials heading it, etc.[10]

2. The second characteristic we have already stressed: the creation of *specialized* institutions and instruments of coercion divorced from the communal whole.

> The second is the establishment of a *public power* which no longer directly coincides with the population organizing itself as an armed force. This special public power

> is necessary because a self-acting armed organization of the population has become impossible since the cleavage into classes. The slaves also belonged to the population; the 90,000 citizens of Athens formed only a privileged class as against the 365,000 slaves. The people's army of the Athenian democracy was an aristocratic public power against the slaves, whom it kept in check; however, a gendarmerie also became necessary to keep the citizens in check. . . . This public power exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men but also of material adjuncts, prisons and institutions of coercion of all kinds, of which gentile [kinship] society knew nothing. It may be very insignificant, almost infinitesimal, in societies where class antagonisms are still undeveloped and in out-of-the-way places as was the case at certain times and in certain regions in the United States of America.* It grows stronger, however, in proportion as class antagonisms within the state become acute, and as adjacent states become larger and more populous. We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have screwed up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even the state itself.[11]

Marx, commenting on the fact that the official title of a Hohenzollern ruler is *Kriegsherr,* "Lord of War," says it means

> that the true prop of their kingly power must be sought for, not in the people, but in a portion of the people, separated from the mass, opposed to it, distinguished by certain badges, trained to passive obedience, drilled into a mere instrument of the dynasty which owns it as its property and uses it according to its caprice.[12]

3. The new state institution, from the very beginning, is more expensive than the old ways of organizing society. It has to be paid for by special contributions from the citizens: *taxes*.

> These were absolutely unknown in gentile society, but we know enough about them today. As civilization advances, these taxes become inadequate; the state makes drafts on the future, contracts loans, *public debts*.[13]

These are all different means by which the state conscripts the citizens' purse to finance itself. It follows that the old saw, "Nothing is certain but death and taxes," is a product of class society, not of human nature.

4. The new and special functions of the state require a new officialdom on an unprecedented scale, which becomes a bureaucracy—a *ruling* officialdom. Now it is true that even in the protopolitical authorities of the tribal communities, the division of labor required that certain individuals become functionaries, devoting most of their time to public functions (religious and tribal chieftains, and so on), but this was often a temporary status, it did not necessarily confer ruling power, and the number involved was small. However, the main

* The coming of state power to these regions is a characteristic theme of the Hollywood Western: the man with the badge or the cavalry detachment galloping to the rescue represents state power (the white man's). Part of the Western's fascination for overcivilized people no doubt stems from a primitive situation existing in relatively recent times.

difference between such functionaries and the typical state bureaucracy lies in something else. The state makes special efforts to separate its bureaucratic personnel from the population as a whole, to erect a special social wall around them, to elevate them above society, to invest them with an aura of unquestionable privilege.

> Having public power and the right to levy taxes, the officials now stand, as organs of society, *above* society. The free, voluntary respect that was accorded to the organs of the gentile constitution does not satisfy them, even if they could gain it; being the vehicles of a power that is becoming alien to society, respect for them must be enforced by means of exceptional laws by virtue of which they enjoy special sanctity and inviolability. The shabbiest police servant in the civilized state has more "authority" than all the organs of gentile [clan] society put together; but the most powerful prince and the greatest statesman, or general, of civilization may well envy the humblest gentile chief for the unstrained and undisputed respect that is paid to him. The one stands in the midst of society, the other is forced to attempt to represent something outside and above it.[14]

While the status of the bureaucracy in society varies considerably according to time and place, it has never been clearer than today that it is this characteristic of officialdom which is increasingly the mark of exploitative societies.

The State as Class Executive

Engels recognized the class role played by the mystique of "the sanctity of the law" very early, before he was much influenced by Marx, that is, in the pages of his *Condition of the Working Class in England*:

> Certainly the law is sacred to the bourgeois, for it is of his own making, put through with his approval and for his protection and benefit. He knows that even if a particular law may injure him as an individual, still the complex of legislation as a whole protects his interests; and that above all the strongest support of his social position is the sanctity of the law and the inviolability of the order established by the active expression of will by one part of society and passive acceptance by the other. It is because the English bourgeois sees his own image in the law, as he does in his God, that he holds it to be holy and that the policeman's club (which is really his own club) holds a power for him that is wonderfully reassuring. But for the worker it certainly does not. The worker knows only too well and from too long experience that the law is a rod that the bourgeois holds over his head, and he does not bother himself about it unless he has to.[15]

Marx noted the pattern of sanctification in a discussion which applied immediately to the justification of private property in land but would apply equally to all private property:

> . . . they [jurists, philosophers, and political economists] disguise the original fact of conquest under the cloak of "Natural Right." If conquest constituted a natural right on the part of the few, the many have only to gather sufficient strength in order to acquire the natural right of reconquering what has been taken from them. In the progress of history the conquerors attempt to give a sort of social sanction to their original title derived from brute force, through the instrumentality of laws imposed by themselves.

> At last comes the philosopher who declares those laws to imply the universal consent of society.[16]

Engels sums up the general analysis as follows:

> Because the state arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but because it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule,*[,17] the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labor by capital.[18]

The best-known summary statement is in the *Communist Manifesto*. This is not directed generally to the nature of the state, but specifically to the situation where

> . . . the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.[19]

And at the end of Part II of the Manifesto: "Political power, properly so called, is [**,[20]] the organized power of one class for oppressing another."[21]

There is a common paraphrase of this, sometimes given (mistakenly) as an actual quotation from Marx, namely "The state is the executive committee of the ruling class." Similar summary sentences will be found elsewhere in Marx and Engels.[22]

The most useful short statement of the role of the state is the one suggested by the Manifesto formulation: the state is the institution "for managing the common affairs" of the ruling class. For Marx, there is no doubt that its basic task ("above all," as Engels says) is to "hold down and exploit the oppressed class." But whenever necessary they make clear that this is not its *only* task, not its *only* role, despite the occurrence of emphatic words like *merely, nothing but,* and so on in short aphoristic formulations.

Subsidiary Tasks of the State

This state, which manages the common affairs of the ruling class, has other tasks too. Three other tasks, in fact, and it is not necessary to go far to find them. They are analogues of the same three tasks we listed a few pages back as characteristic of *any* organizing authority in a

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* Note the qualification "as a rule": immediately following this section as quoted, Engels goes on to discuss exceptions to the rule. A similar qualification occurs in his *Origin of the Family*: "The cohesive force of civilized society is the state, which in all typical periods is exclusively the state of the ruling class. . . . "

** The standard Marx-Engels translation inserts the word *merely* at this point; it is not in the German original. Like the *but* (*nur*) in the preceding citation ("The executive of the modern state is but a committee . . . "), the word is an intensive.

society, even in a stateless community. Translated into state terms, these subsidiary tasks may be described as follows:

1. There are certain functions which any government must perform in order to keep the society going, even if we assume they are of no special advantage to the ruling class. Sanitation departments prevent epidemics; policemen find lost babies; help is given to areas struck by natural disasters like hurricanes or earthquakes. These may take on the appearance of nonclass functions even in a class-bound state.
2. The state developed from the beginning on a national or imperial basis; it exists within territorial boundaries. As a national state, it manages the common affairs of the ruling class of that particular state as against the rival ruling classes of other national states. Entrenched behind national boundaries, the separate states vie for trade, raw materials, investment, commercial advantage, and so on. Behind each boundary, one of the tasks of the state is to safeguard and advance the interests of its own ruling class against all rivals.
3. The ruling class itself is not a monolithic block; it is shot through with criss-crossing interest blocs, as well as ordinary individual competitive antagonisms. Particularly under capitalism—which begins as dog-eat-dog competition—one of the tasks of the state is to mediate, reconcile, in some way settle the internecine disputes and conflicts *within* the ruling class. This does not imply that the state institutions act as impartial Solomons even in intracapitalist terms: for there is a hierarchy of economic power as well as political influence. But some kind of settlement of intraclass disputes there must be, in order to avoid tearing the whole social fabric apart in an unregulated melee.

What is the relationship between the basic task of the state ("holding down and exploiting the oppressed class") and the three subsidiary tasks which we have described? There are two differences to be noted.

1. The most obvious difference is that, from Marx's standpoint, the state's task of class domination is not only basic but its specific *reason for existence*. The other three are tasks which the state has taken over from its preceding protopolitical institutions; it is not these tasks which bring the state into existence.

   Operationally, this difference has a profound consequence for the historical reactions of the ruling class; for experience shows that in practice the ruling class *does subordinate* the three subsidiary tasks to the first (basic) task, where there is a clash. It will forget internal class differences to make common cause against a threat from below, and it will conspire with the national enemy if its own working class threatens its rear. As Marx noted that the Prussians were aiding the French Versailles government in crushing the Paris Commune, he added:

   > It was only the old story. The upper classes always united to keep down the working class. In the eleventh century there was a war between some French knights and Norman knights, and the peasants rose in insurrection; the knights immediately forgot their differences and coalesced to crush the movement of the peasants.[23]

About the same time, he entered in his notebook:

> The *Paris-Journal,* the most ignoble of the Versailles papers, says: "the peace has been signed.—With our enemies? No, with the Prussians. And, however great our hatred may

> be of those who ruined us [Prussians], we must say that it cannot equal the horror with which we are filled by those who dishonor us [Parisians]."[24]

In domestic affairs, wrote Marx, the same bourgeois liberals who condemn government intervention are the first to demand it if the target is the working class:

> These same "gallant" free-traders, renowned for their indefatigability in denouncing government interference, these apostles of the bourgeois doctrine of *laissez-faire,* who profess to leave everything and everybody to the struggles of individual interests are always the first to appeal to the interference of Government as soon as the individual interests of the working-man come into conflict with their own class-interests. In such moments of collision they look with open admiration at the Continental States where despotic governments, though, indeed, not allowing the bourgeoisie to rule, at least prevent the working-men from resisting.[25]

2. The second difference is that the three subsidiary tasks, unlike the basic task, may convey the appearance of being nonclass in character, as if simply actuated by the need of society or nation as a whole rather than by the self-interest of the dominant class. On this ground it has been common to attack the Marxist "exaggeration" which views the state as primarily a class instrument. This is not the place to argue the question, but only to establish what Marx's viewpoint is.

   It should be clear from what has already been explained that there is no question about one thing: the state really does have nonclass tasks, and it carries them out. *But it carries them out inevitably in class-distorted ways, for class ends, with class consequences*.

The Class Nature of the State

The position has nothing to do with denying that there are all kinds of nonclass *aspects* to society. What is important is understanding that the class character of a society permeates every aspect of the society, including these.

One illustration: it is certainly in the interest of society as a whole, that epidemics be prevented; hence sanitation can be regarded as a nonclass task of government. But in historical fact the ruling powers embraced city-wide sanitation only when it was impressed on them that plagues originating among the poor also killed the rich. Marx noted in *Capital* that "the mere fear of contagious diseases which do not spare even 'respectability,' brought into existence from 1847 to 1864 no less than ten Acts of Parliament on sanitation," and "the frightened bourgeois" in the big cities took municipal measures.[26] Engels describes what happened as science proved that such ravaging diseases as cholera and smallpox incubated their germs in the pestilential conditions of the poor districts before spreading to the other side of the tracks:

> As soon as this fact had been scientifically established the philanthropic bourgeois became inflamed with a noble spirit of competition in their solicitude for the health of their workers. Societies were founded, books were written, proposals drawn up, laws debated and passed, in order to stop up the sources of the ever-recurring epidemics. The housing conditions of the workers were investigated and attempts made to remedy the most crying evils.

The capitalist state exerts itself to do the workers good, and its professors can now easily prove that the class bias of the state is grossly exaggerated. But to this day the class character

of sanitation can be observed with the naked eye by comparing any workers' district with any rich residential district. The dominant economic interests certainly will not allow conditions so bad as to breed plagues:

> Nevertheless, the capitalist order of society reproduces again and again the evils to be remedied, and does so with such inevitable necessity that even in England the remedying of them has hardly advanced a single step.[27]

The next remedial step is "urban renewal" or slum clearance, in the name of such obviously nonclass aspirations as "civic improvement." This pattern was already an old story to Marx, who pointed out in *Capital*:

> "Improvements" of towns, accompanying the increase of wealth, by the demolition of badly built quarters, the erection of palaces for banks, warehouses, &c., the widening of streets for business traffic, for the carriages of luxury [automobile freeways], and for the introduction of tramways, &c. [rapid-transit projects], drive away the poor into even worse and more crowded hiding places.[28]

Engels pointed to the Bonapartist prefect of Paris, Haussmann, as the model for

> the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this practice is occasioned by considerations of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or by traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighborhood.[29]

In sum: the class nature of the state is attested not by the fact that every act is necessarily, equally, and exclusively in the direct interest of the ruling class only, but by the fact that all other interests are regularly *subordinated* to the interests of the ruling class, that the acts of the state are decisively shaped by what the ruling class and its representatives conceive its interests to be, and take place only within the framework of those interests. Along these lines Engels makes a comparison:

> As all the driving forces of the actions of any individual person must pass through his brain, and transform themselves into motives of his will in order to set him into action, so also all the needs of civil society—no matter which class happens to be the ruling one—must pass through the will of the state in order to secure general validity in the form of laws. . . . If we inquire into this we discover that in modern history the will of the state is, on the whole, determined by the changing needs of civil society, by the supremacy of this or that class, in the last resort, by the development of the productive forces and relations of exchange.[30]

The needs of society, no matter how class-neutral in origin or intention, cannot be met without passing through the political (and other) institutions set up by a class-conditioned society; and it is in the course of being processed through these channels that they are shaped,

sifted, skewed, molded, modeled, and modulated to fit within the framework established by the ruling interests and ideas. This is how the class nature of the state and the society asserts itself, even without malevolent purposes or sinister plots.

Notes

1. Letter, Engels to Spanish Federated Council of the International Working Men's Association, 13 February 1871, in Marx and Engels *Selected Correspondence,* 260.
2. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 326–327.
3. Marx, *Capital,* Volume I, 751; Marx, *Grundrisse,* 28–29.
4. Marx, *Notebook on Maine,* 329.
5. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 370.
6. Marx, "Mazzini and Napoleon," in *New York Tribune,* 11 May 1858.
7. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology,* Marx and Engels *Werke* Volume 3, 36.
8. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 369.
9. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 280–283.
10. Marx, *Grundrisse,* 383.
11. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 327.
12. Marx, "Preparations for War in Russia," in *New York Tribune,* 8 November 1860.
13. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 328.
14. Ibid.
15. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England,* Marx and Engels *Werke* Volume 2, 443–444.
16. Marx, "The Nationalization of the Land," in *Labour Monthly* reprint, 415.
17. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 332.
18. Ibid., 328.
19. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works,* Volume 1, 110–111.
20. For the German original, see Marx and Engels *Werke,* Volume 4, 464.
21. Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works,* Volume 1, 127.
22. For example, Engels, *The Housing Question,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 2, 347; Marx, *The Civil War in France,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 2, 218.
23. Marx, "Report at 23 May 1871 session of the General Council of the International Working Men's Association in *G.C.F.I.* 70–71 [4], 201.
24. Marx, "Notebook on the Paris Commune," April–May 1871, 150.
25. Marx, "English Prosperity-Strikes-The Turkish Question-India," in *New York Tribune,* 1 July 1853.
26. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, 658.
27. Engels, *The Housing Question,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 2, 324.
28. Marx, *Capital* Volume I, 657.
29. Engels, *The Housing Question,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 2, 350.
30. Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy,* in Marx and Engels *Selected Works* Volume 3, 369–370.

Chapter 10

Defining the Class Dominance View

G. William Domhoff

Introduction

My most general assumption is that social power is rooted in organizations. I define organizations simply as sets of rules, roles, and routines developed to accomplish some particular purpose.

Since human beings have a vast array of "purposes," they have formed an appropriately large number of organizations. But only a few of these purposes and organizations weigh heavily in terms of generating social power. According to Mann's analysis, Western civilization and the current power configurations within it are best understood by determining the intertwinings and relative importance at any given time of organizations based in four "overlapping and intersecting sociospatial networks of power" (1986:1). These networks are labeled ideological, economic, military, and political, and placed in that particular order only because it makes for a handy memory device—IEMP. This lack of concern with order of presentation is possible because no one of these organizational networks is more fundamental than the others. Each one presupposes the existence of the others, which vindicates philosopher Bertrand Russell's (1938:10–11) earlier demonstration that power cannot be reduced to one basic form; in that sense, says Russell, power is like the idea of energy in the natural sciences.

This starting point immediately puts Mann at odds with schools of thought operating in terms of the ultimate primacy of historical materialism or the state, but it allows him to have agreements with the Marxists for some eras and the state autonomists for others. Mann's view thus puts an enormous emphasis on history, and hence on empirical studies.

Before I explain each of the four major organizational networks, I want to stress that the theory is not derived from any psychological assumptions about the importance of different human purposes. Instead, the point is strictly sociological: these four networks happen to be the most useful organizational bases for generating social power. In Mann's words, "Their primacy comes not from the strength of human desires for ideological, economic, military, or political satisfaction but from the particular organizational means each possesses to attain human goals, whatever they may be" (1986:2).

In the American vernacular, we can say each organizational network is in the business of selling some service or product needed by many members of a society. The ideology network sells meaning, answers to universal concerns about the origins of humanity, death, the purpose of life, and other existential questions. Churches are the primary salespeople in this area, and some of them have developed into formidable power generators, such as the Catholic church in Europe for many centuries. In the United States, secular organizations like self-help groups and psychotherapy cults have enjoyed some success in marketing

meaning to the college-educated middle class, but churches remain the most important organizations in fulfilling this human need for Americans. Protestant churches in particular always have had an enormous role in producing American morality and culture. However, their constant splintering into new denominations, and then further schisms within the denominations, has limited them as a source of social power. The historical role of churches also has been limited through the separation of church and state by the Founding Fathers, reflecting both the weak nature of the church network at the time and the Founders' own secular tendencies. True, the Catholic church was a power base in some urban areas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the Democratic party, often making alliances with the political machines, but more recently its power has been limited to realms like abortion and school prayer. Religious values end up for the most part as one of the many hooks used in the symbolic politics played by economic rivals in trying to further their own interests.

The economic network is in the business of selling material goods and personal services. It creates classes defined in terms of their power over the different parts of the economic process from extraction of raw materials to manufacturing to distribution. Since these economic classes are also social relationships between groups of people who often have different interests, the economic network also can generate class conflict, by which I mean disagreements over such matters as ownership, profit margins, wage rates, working conditions, and unionization that manifest themselves in ways that range from workplace protests and strikes to industrywide boycotts and bargaining to nationwide political actions. However, class conflict is not always present because both owners and workers, the most likely rival classes in recent times, have to have the means to organize themselves over an extended area of social space for conflict to occur. For much of Western history, there have been "ruling classes," defined by Mann as any "economic class that has successfully monopolized other power sources to dominate a state-centered society at large" (1986:25). However, because nonowning classes usually find it difficult to organize, class conflict has been important only in certain periods of history, such as ancient Greece, early Rome, and the present capitalist era. In other words, Mann does not see class conflict as the "motor" of history, putting his theory in disagreement with Marxism once again.

In the United States, the economic network leads to the corporations, banks, plantations, agribusinesses, and trade unions of primary concern of this book. The nationwide nature of the transportation and communication systems, and the commonality of language, education, and culture, mean that the bases for class solidarity and class conflict are present in the United States. Moreover, I believe that such class conflict has frequently manifested itself since the late nineteenth century and has been the single most important factor (but not the only factor) driving American politics in the twentieth century. This standpoint may seem to put me at odds with the great majority of social scientists and historians, who see the basic conflict as one between conservatives and liberals, but I will try to show that this conservative/liberal conflict is more fully analyzed as a class conflict. Conservatism is the ideology of the corporate rich and their allies, liberalism the ideology of the working class and its allies. More specifically, I will try to show that a corporate-conservative coalition contends with a liberal-labor coalition for the allegiance of voters from the many occupational, ethnic, and religious groups comprising the American working class. As historians emphasize, the content of conservatism and liberalism does evolve over time: one side is the party of order, the other the party of hope, as the saying goes, but I think the different interests of capitalists and their employees are at the heart of the conflict.

The third network of social power, the military, is in the business of organized violence, sometimes for the benefit of its own members, as in what Mann calls empires of

domination, but more often in recent centuries as a service to ideological, economic, or political networks. Organizations of violence are most often attached to a state, but they are sometimes separate from it, which is one reason why the state autonomy theorists' emphasis on the monopolization of legitimate coercion in defining the state is not general enough as a starting point (Skocpol 1993:43). In the United States in the late nineteenth century, for example, corporations often created their own organizations of violence to break strikes or resist unions, or else hired private specialists in such work. The largest of the private armies in that era, the Pinkerton Detective Agency, "had more men than the U.S. Army" (Mann 1993:646). The state did not interfere with organized corporate violence until the 1930s because most of the unionization efforts by workers were defined by judges as violations of property rights and/or the right to freedom of contract; employers thus had a legitimate right to "defend" their property and hire replacement workers and private armies (pp. 645–48).

As for the American government's own army, it had a large role historically in taking territory from Native Americans, Spain, and Mexico, but it was never big enough for long enough until the Second World War to be considered a serious contender for social power. True, several famous generals became presidents starting with George Washington (who was also a large landholder of his day), but there has been no sustained organizational base for turning military power into social power. The generals who became presidents had "name recognition" and prestige as war heroes, but it was not the military who carried them to political victory.

The fourth and final network, the state, which Mann calls the political network, is in the business of selling territorial regulation, which means order, dispute resolution, and regularity within a fixed area of land. This task of regulation within a bounded area most fundamentally defines the state and makes it potentially autonomous. The economic network, and people in general, desperately need this service, but no other network is capable of providing it for sustained periods of time.

The lack of emphasis on coercion and domination in explaining the origins of the state once again places Mann's theory in historical disagreement with Marxism, which sees the origins of the state in class conflict between owners and workers, making it an organization of class domination from the outset. Archaeological and historical evidence does not presently support the Marxist view (e.g., Claessen and Skalnik 1978; Cohen and Service 1978; Mann 1986:49–63, 84–87). Lest I seem to be giving hostages here to state autonomy theorists, let me quickly add that Mann sees the American state of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (which is where his account ends for now) as a capitalist-liberal formation embodying basic capitalist principles, using its courts and armies to crush labor organizing, and responding to political parties wherein capitalists have at the least a large amount of influence (1993:635–59, 705).

Historically, states were not highly important in the Western world in the one thousand years following the fall of the Roman Empire. They gradually grew in power in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the context of the growth of capitalism on the one hand and the development of an arms race on another. A highly competitive system of nation-states arose in Europe in which only the militarily powerful states survived, usually in alliance with economic elites willing to pay for the necessary armies in exchange for protection of property rights and the regulation of markets. Within this context, states usually came to have the monopoly on legitimate violence that state autonomy theorists emphasize (i.e., armies capable of policing the state territory and defending it against outsiders). States also gained dominance over ideology networks: nationalism and idolization of the head of state gradually mingled with Christianity in providing meaning for the lives of ordinary citizens. The

question of social power narrowed to the relative power of economic and state elites, which is a good part of the story of Western history in the past few hundred years. Thus, the American case I am focusing on here is but one in a much larger set, and the outcomes vary greatly from country to country (Mann 1993).

In the United States, the political network has been decentralized and fragmented to a degree unique among industrialized societies for a variety of reasons taught in junior high school. It also is highly unusual in the degree to which it is staffed by a certain kind of specialist, the lawyer. Lawyers already were important in colonial America, and thirty-three of the fifty-five delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1789 were lawyers, although they were well-born property owners as well (Mann 1993:157). They remained equally important ever after as the Constitution and the Supreme Court became central features of the American state, and involvement in a political party became the main avenue to a judicial appointment. Twenty-six of the forty-two American presidents have been lawyers, as have a majority of national-level legislators (Eulau and Sprague 1964).

* * * *

But are these lawyer/politicians acting primarily in terms of the independent interests of the state, as the state autonomy theorists would say, or instead making sure that the needs of the top economic class are being met even while doing the necessary minimum of regulating and adjudicating? Are lawyer/politicians specialists in smoothing over class conflict? With those questions we can take leave of this general discussion of the four networks of social power and turn to the . . . class dominance theory of power in the United States.

* * * *

I want to demonstrate the value of a specific theoretical framework: class dominance. Specifically I want to show there is (1) a small social upper class (2) rooted in the ownership and control of a corporate community that (3) is integrated with a policy-planning network and (4) has great political power in both political parties and dominates the federal government in Washington. That may appear to be a tall order because terms like "social upper class" and "corporate community" may seem hard to specify, and evidence for "great influence" in political parties and "domination" of the federal government difficult to come by. But it can be done with a fair amount of rigor.

Specifying the Class Dominance Framework

Introduction

In this section I am going to define all the concepts used in my theory, and show how they are studied. I am also going to explain how my theory involves a synthesis of a class theory with what is often thought to be its antithesis in American sociology, an organizational theory, thereby creating what I call a class/organizational synthesis. As I will argue, this synthesis takes place through boards of directors, the legal holders of power in virtually every profit and nonprofit organization in this country.

Social Class/Upper Class

Formally speaking, a social class is a network of interacting and intermarrying families who see each other as equals and accord each other social respect. For my purposes, though, social

classes as networks of interacting and intermarrying families are only a starting point. If and when such social classes are found, it is then possible to take the next step and see if they are based in one or more economic classes, and to determine the underlying economic and political relationships between social classes. Within this context it also is possible to talk of segments within the underlying economic classes, meaning groupings within an economic class that have somewhat different interests due to their particular position within the overall social structure. In the case of the ownership class in the United States, these segments have different bases of wealth and partially conflicting interests on some issues while sharing strong common concerns in the face of initiatives by nonowners or agencies within the state.

As far as an upper social class, everyone agrees that one exists in the United States, but they disagree on what, if anything, it has to do with economic classes or power. Is it a mere status group with little or no power, or is it also a capitalist (ownership) class whose members dominate the state, as determined by one or more agreed-upon indicators of power? In order to answer these questions, we first of all need an empirical or operational definition of the upper class, that is, a set of indicators of upper-class standing.

We can talk of the upper class as an institutional network of schools, clubs, and resort areas (Domhoff 1983:17–18). This institutional network has persisted in roughly its present form for a little over one hundred years now, although there have been some additions, subtractions, and alterations. New clubs spring up when the young men do not want to be in the "stuffy" clubs of the older men; a Junior League is developed as women of the upper class gain more independence; a prep school becomes too liberal and loses support; a resort area starts to be frequented by members of the middle class. These are ebbs and flows: the institutional network remains intact.

We know far less about the continuity of the families who create and utilize this institutional network. We found in a sample of 5,900 families in the 1980 *Social Register* that 9 percent listed themselves as members of one of four ancestral societies dating back at least to the American Revolution (Domhoff 1983:22). Baltzell's (1958) work shows continuity back to the seventeenth century in several elite Philadelphia families. Two studies of families in Detroit demonstrated continuity over three generations (Schuby 1975; Davis 1982), as did a study of families involved in the steel industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Ingham 1978:230–31). We know that some members of the upper class marry outside their class, usually someone from the upper-middle class they met at college, but the best general picture for now is a stable family group within the upper class that incorporates new members, including newly wealthy capitalists whatever their social origins (Domhoff 1983:34–36).

The existence of the network of upper-class institutions makes it possible to determine if and to what extent members of this class are involved in corporations, political parties, government, and other institutions of the society. Through this tracing outward we can determine overrepresentation and discover other institutional networks. For any systematic research seeking to link social class with the power centers of the society, the upper-class institutions are truly the bedrock starting point.

* * * *

Our many studies of the membership networks generated from the *Social Register,* private club membership lists, and private school alumni lists demonstrate beyond a doubt that the upper-class network is nationwide in its scope and surprisingly dense (Domhoff 1970: chap. 4). So does the outstanding study of women of the upper class by Susan Ostrander (1984). It is likely that most members of the upper class have connections in most major cities through common schooling, clubs, or resorts, and can reach a wide array of people through

friends of friends. If we think of meetings at clubs, resorts, and alumni gatherings as a series of constantly changing small groups, then research findings in social psychology on social cohesion in small groups become relevant to issues of power because socially cohesive groups are better able to solve problems than less cohesive groups due to a greater desire to reach common understanding. My inference from this research is that social cohesion facilitates policy cohesion within the upper class (Domhoff 1974: chap. 3).

* * * *

The Power Elite

Members of the upper class, if they rule America, certainly do not do so alone. There are not that many of them to begin with, especially when half of them have been excluded by sexism from pursuing traditional pathways to power. Moreover, many members of the upper class are not interested in ruling. They prefer to live the good life based on their inherited wealth, even leaving the management of their stock portfolios to hired experts. They spend their time breeding dogs or horses, traveling, or mingling with celebrities at glitzy social events. Now, there are fewer such people than meet the eye, but the first issue we face in claiming that the upper class is a ruling—or governing—class is that many of its members do not seem to be involved in ruling.

Moreover, America seems to be an organizational society, not a class one. What is most obvious about it are the large "institutional hierarchies," as Mills (1956) called them, that developed throughout the twentieth century—large corporations, the Pentagon, the executive branch of the federal government, but also large public university systems like the University of California (nine campuses), hospital complexes like the Mayo Clinic, charitable foundations like the Ford Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation, and more. How could members of a small upper class dominate such a vast array of diverse and apparently independent institutions, each with its own history, traditions, purposes, and internal methods of operation?

At this point the boards of directors of these institutions come into the picture as the official repository of final authority in them. I believe the class and organizational dimensions of American society meet on these boards. Board members from the upper class bring a class perspective to the management of the organization, while the managers of the organization who have risen within it to serve on the board of directors bring an organizational perspective. The board is thus one nexus for a synthesis of the class and organizational viewpoints. Its members strive to keep the organization viable in terms of organizational principles while incorporating the class perspectives of the upper-class directors.

This viewpoint provides an empirical starting point for linking studies of class-based social power to organizations: if there is evidence that a board of directors is controlled by members of the upper class, then we can say the institution itself is controlled by members of the upper class. We can determine this control by studying the history of the board, the funding of the organization, or the composition of the board. In practice we usually end up studying the composition of the board when it comes to the large number of corporations. However, more attention has been paid to history and funding with other organizations, partly because there are fewer of them, partly because the relevant information is more accessible.

Generally speaking, board members wield their power through hiring and firing the leadership level of organizations. They pick and choose among the organizational executives striving to reach the top, whom they know from serving on board-based committees with them, or they bring in a new top executive made known to them by their network of

upper-class friends serving on other boards of directors. Boards are especially important in times of crisis or potential mergers (e.g., Mace 1971; Bowen 1994). Board committees often do far more than meets the eye (Lorsch and MacIver 1989).

If boards of directors are given their due, then we have one key to the means by which the upper class exerts its influence: a leadership group I call the *power elite*. I define the power elite as active, working members of the upper class and high-level employees in institutions controlled by members of the upper class. High-level employees are defined as those selected or approved directly by the board of directors, which usually means the chairperson and president, along with a few other high-level employees who may be asked to serve on the board. It follows that all those executives serving on a board of directors in an institution controlled by members of the upper class are members of the power elite. A few senior members of long standing may have no present institutional affiliations, but for the most part members of the power elite are directors or high-level employees of one or more organizations in the institutional network.

But what institutions in American society are controlled by members of the upper class according to this definition? Every type of institution from major businesses to private universities to cultural and fine arts organizations to private welfare agencies, which is possible because some people sit on many different boards. For my purposes, though, I want to focus on those organizations I think are most involved in the exercise of power.

The Corporate Community

The corporate community is defined in network terms as all those corporations connected into one network by people who serve on two or more boards of directors. Below this visible level there are also common stock ownership, shared lawyers and investment bankers, and other link-ages that help make the idea of a corporate community a sociological reality.

The corporate community can be traced back in American history as far as there are adequate records, to 1816, where David Bunting's (1983) important archival work shows that the ten largest banks and ten largest insurance companies in New York City were completely connected; eighteen directors with three or more positions linked 95 percent of the companies in the sample. There were, of course, other interlocks as well. Bunting's sample of the twenty largest banks, ten largest insurance companies, and ten largest railroads for 1836 generated a corporate community that included 95 percent of the sample firms; this time 30 men held 103 directorships linking 73 percent of the corporations (Bunting 1983:133–38). His samples for later in the century show similar results, which are supplemented by Roy's (1983) detailed study of a sample of firms in eleven industries between 1886 and 1904, showing that the corporate community grew out from a core of railroads, banks, coal, and telegraph companies in 1886 to encompass all the industries in his sample by 1904. Work by Mizruchi (1982, 1983) picks up the story at that point and shows the stability of these findings until 1974. Railroads gradually become more peripheral to the network as the importance of railroads in the American economy declined, and industrial corporations became more central, but throughout the seventy-year period the network remained intact, with banks at the center. The four most central banks in 1974 were also the central banks in the 1904 network, created by either the Morgan financial interests or the Rockefeller family (e.g., Mizruchi 1983:176–77).

According to our indicators of upper-class membership, the upper class was overrepresented by a factor of fifty-three in a sample of the largest corporations in three sectors for 1963; the figure for the top fifteen banks was sixty-two; for the top fifteen insurance companies, forty-four; and for the twenty largest industrials, fifty-four (Domhoff 1967:52–55).

Dye (1976:151–52), using a sample of 201 corporations for 1970, estimates that 30 percent of the directors had upper-class origins. The figure is even higher for the inner circle, where two to three times as many directors are members of the upper class in different samples (Soref 1980; Domhoff 1983:71–72).

The findings on the overlap between the upper class and the corporate community reinforce my earlier conclusion based on the great wealth possessed by members of the upper class: this social group is also a capitalist class. This fact makes the conceptual and terminological arguments between Marxists and other social scientists over class vs. status groups into moot ones for at least the top level of American society in the twentieth century because the highest status group is rooted in the ownership and control of large banks and corporations. In the phrase coined by Mills (1956:147), we are dealing with a "corporate rich." This may not seem like news in the 1990s, but from the 1940s through the 1970s the widespread belief in the alleged separation of ownership and control, with managerial specialists from the middle class supposedly controlling the corporations, was one of the main reasons mainstream social scientists rejected the idea of a power elite or ruling class.

In addition to the upper-class overrepresentation on the boards of directors, there are many board members who are not members of the upper class. Most of these other directors are executives who have risen through the corporate ranks, but there also are college presidents, academic experts, former politicians, former military men, celebrities, and in recent years, various kinds of "tokens" [see Domhoff (1967:51–52) and Zweigenhaft and Domhoff (1982:25–46) for discussions of the pathways to board status]. The important point about the upwardly mobile executives is that they are chosen on the basis of their ability to realize goals determined for the corporation by members of the upper class, meaning first and foremost producing a profit, but also corporate expansion and good public relations as well. Through their educations at top business schools, their experience in the corporate world, and their gradual accrual of stock through generous option plans, they are assimilated into the social life and worldview of the corporate rich (Domhoff 1983:73–76).

* * * *

Skocpol and other state autonomists constantly try to narrow the argument to the power of business executives compared to state officials and experts, but my theory is much more general, as the foregoing discussion demonstrates. I am talking about a social upper class and an economic class (i.e., a corporate community in its current form) that are two sides of the same coin, not simply about executives. Further evidence for the greater breadth of my perspective will be presented in the next section on the policy-planning network that is based in the upper class and corporate community. Power in twentieth-century America cannot be discussed in any faintly realistic way without an understanding of the role played by this important network.

The Policy-Planning Network

Tracing out the nonbusiness directorships of wealthy men and corporate directors led me to the discovery of what I came to call the policy-planning network (Domhoff 1967, 1970: chaps. 5 and 6). It consists of (1) foundations, (2) think tanks, (3) specialized research institutes at major universities, and (4) general policy discussion groups, where members of the upper class and corporate community meet with experts from the think tanks and research institutes, journalists, and government officials to discuss policy, ideology, and plans (PIP) concerning the major issues facing the country (Domhoff 1979: chap. 3; Alpert and Markusen 1980; Useem 1984). The general way in which I think people, money, and ideas flow through the network is shown in Figure 10.1.

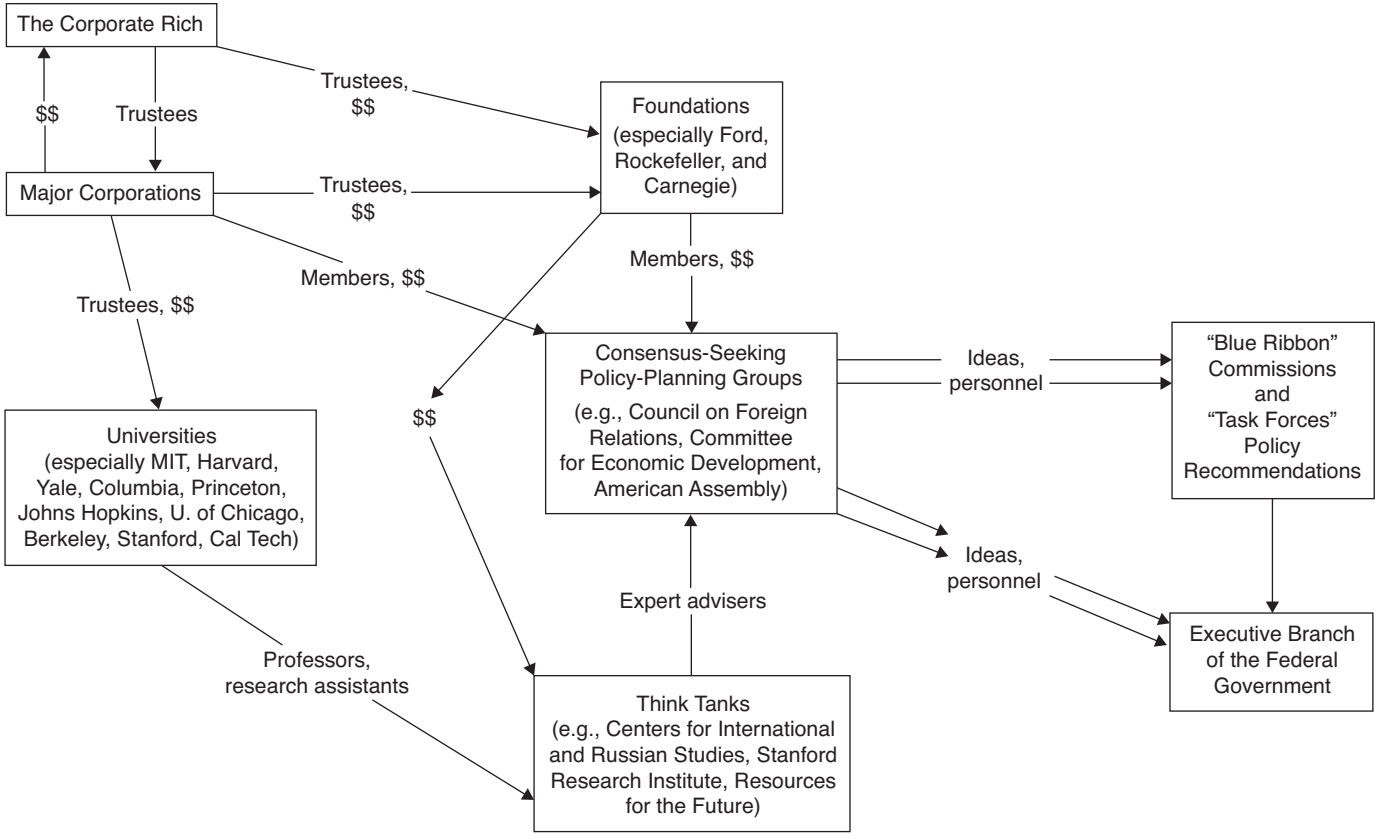
The Corporate Rich
$$
Trustees
Trustees, $$
Foundations (especially Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie)
Major Corporations
Trustees, $$
Members, $$
Trustees, $$
Members, $$
Consensus-Seeking Policy-Planning Groups
(e.g., Council on Foreign Relations, Committee for Economic Development, American Assembly)
Ideas, personnel
"Blue Ribbon" Commissions and "Task Forces" Policy Recommendations
$$
Universities (especially MIT, Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, U. of Chicago, Berkeley, Stanford, Cal Tech)
Ideas, personnel
Expert advisers
Executive Branch of the Federal Government
Professors, research assistants
Think Tanks (e.g., Centers for International and Russian Studies, Stanford Research Institute, Resources for the Future)

Figure 10.1 The flow of policy from corporations and their owners to government. *(From G. William Domhoff, "How the Power Elite Set National Goals," in Robert Perrucci and Marc Pilisuk [eds.], The Triple Revolution Emerging, Boston, Little, Brown, 1971, p. 213.)*

The organizations in the policy-planning network are nonprofit and tax-free, and are therefore portrayed by their leaders as separate from the corporate community. They are also said to be nonpartisan or bipartisan, above the political fray, not tied to either major party. Contrary to these claims, the policy-planning network is, in fact, the programmatic political party for the upper class and the corporate community, a major element in the power elite. There are differences of opinion between different parts of the network, for reasons that I have admitted are not well understood (Domhoff 1983:91), and even between individuals in the same organization, but the general stance of the network ranges from moderate conservative to ultra-conservative. The existence of this network leads me to believe the upper class and corporate community are organized above and beyond the interest group level stressed by most theorists. To the degree that case studies on its operation are convincing (e.g., Weinstein 1968; Shoup and Minter 1977; Domhoff 1979: chap. 3; 1990; Peschek 1987), then my view is supported, but more case studies are clearly needed.

The specification of a policy-planning network also provides us with a way to deal with claims by the state autonomy theorists about the importance of independent experts. For them, of course, all experts are independent because they are not capitalists or corporate executives. Thanks to the policy-planning network, we can say a person is a *corporate expert* if he or she is an employee of a foundation, think tank, or discussion group in the network, and even a member of the power elite if on the board of directors of one of these organizations.[1]

The main financial engine for the policy-planning network is a set of charitable foundations that began to appear on the landscape in the early twentieth century. They have been conducting studies, funding think tanks and universities, and providing grants for individual scholars ever since. In the 1950s, when the huge Ford Foundation joined the network, this foundational complex seemed to be complete, but in the 1970s very conservative members of the corporate community created a new set of foundations that fueled the rise of the New Right (Colwell 1980, 1993; Jenkins and Shumate 1985; Allen 1992).

* * * *

The think tanks in the network are highly specialized research groups that produce the PIP that are argued about in the policy discussion groups. They compete with each other for grants from the foundations and government agencies. There is a very limited market for their output—essentially corporations and government. If think tanks are looked at as if they were business firms competing in a market, it can be readily understood why they could not stray very far from the corporate community and the foundations even if they did not have people from the business and foundational networks on their boards of directors [Alpert and Markusen (1980) provide this insight].

* * * *

The policy discussion groups, consisting of several hundred or even a few thousand members, only some of whom are active at any given time, are the integrating centers within the policy-planning network. They are not places of power, nor even of ideas, but meeting grounds for those with power and those with PIP. Although they sponsor speakers, large conferences, and written policy statements, their most important method of operation is through smaller discussion groups that meet on a weekly or monthly basis. I see these organizations as having several major functions not appreciated by either interest group or state autonomy theorists. If rival theorists took these functions more seriously, they would see why businessmen bring a general power elite perspective when they serve in government and why many experts are known personally by members of the upper class and corporate community.

First, the discussion organizations provide an informal training ground for new leadership within the power elite. The various small discussion groups within each of them are in effect

seminars for corporate leaders conducted by experts from the think tanks and university research institutes. Second, it is within these organizations that members of the power elite sort out in an informal fashion which of their peers are best suited for government positions. This is valuable information when they are asked by friends who serve as financial angels to politicians to suggest people for government appointments. Third, corporate experts learn the perspectives of business leaders on the issues of the day, which helps in fitting the PIP to corporate needs. Fourth, the upper-class and corporate members of these organizations have the opportunity to become acquainted with the corporate experts, sizing them up for possible service in government. In a little study I did of members of the Council of Economic Advisers, I found that eleven of its first thirteen chairs came from the policy-planning network; six had been advisers for one policy discussion organization alone, the Committee for Economic Development (Domhoff 1987:195–96).

In addition, these organizations have two major functions in relation to the rest of society: First, they legitimate their members as persons capable of government service and selfless pursuit of the national interest. Members are portrayed as giving up their free time for no reimbursement to take part in highly selective organizations that are nonprofit and nonpartisan in nature. Second, through such avenues as books, journals, policy statements, press releases, and speakers, these groups influence the climate of opinion both in Washington and the country at large. That is, they have ideological as well as policy functions.

* * * *

Now that the relationship of the policy-planning network to the upper class and corporate community is clearly established, I want to close this section with a visual representation of how the three networks are interconnected. As Figure 10.2 shows, some people are members

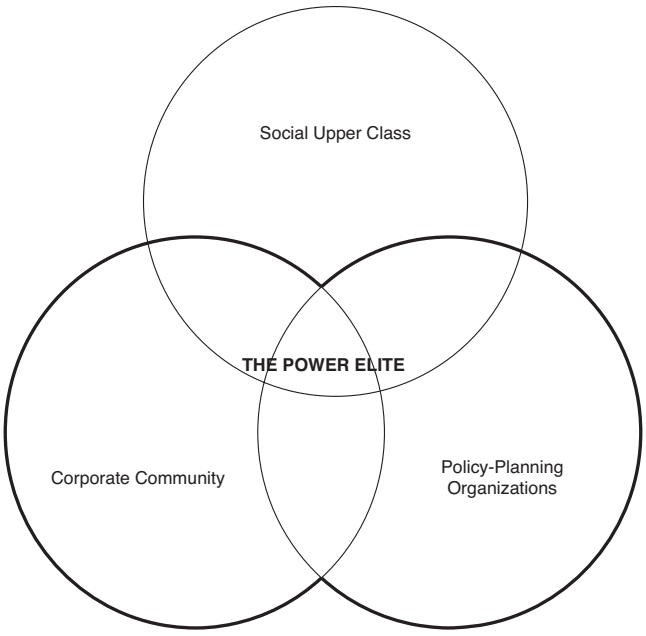

Figure 10.2 A multinetwork view of the relationship between the upper class and the power elite, showing the overlaps of the social upper class, corporate community, and policy-planning network. The power elite is defined by the thick lines.

of only one of the three, others of two, and a few of all three. Those who are members of all three are certainly at the heart of the power elite, but we also see that people who are neither upper class nor corporate leaders can be members of it by virtue of their high-level positions in the policy-planning network. This diagram reinforces what I explained in my earlier discussion about the relationship of the upper class and the power elite. On the one hand, a person can be a member of the upper class, but not involved in governing. Conversely, a person can be a member of the power elite, but not in the upper class. Thus, this diagram provides a detailed view of the networks that make up the power elite, showing the people involved in the class/organizational synthesis. It warns again that to reduce my view to one of dominance by business executives, as the state autonomy theorists do, is inaccurate.

Conservatives, Liberals, and Class Conflict

If we were able to do a membership network analysis that included every person in the United States, we would find very few people in any institutional network. This conclusion follows from studies showing that only one-third participate in any policy-oriented organization even at the local level, and only 10 percent give any money to a political party (e.g., Hamilton 1972: chap. 2; Flacks 1988: chap. 2). However, if we look more narrowly at the networks created by the shared memberships, financing, and policy positions of lobbying and advocacy groups, we find two coalitions competing for the attention, allegiance, and votes of the Great Unorganized (e.g., McCune 1956; Deakin 1966; Ross 1967; Hall 1969; Melone 1977).

The first coalition is based in the upper class and power elite, which reach out to and fund a very large number of conservative groups concerned with tax reduction, patriotism, religion, and morality. It has the support of the real estate and development interest ("growth elites") that dominate local and county governments (Molotch 1976, 1979; Logan and Molotch 1987). I call this the corporate-conservative coalition.

The second of these coalitions is based in liberal organizations and trade unions. This liberal-labor coalition is less well financed and is of more recent vintage, roughly the second term of Roosevelt's presidency. It came into being because of the Great Depression as one part of the larger Roosevelt coalition, which already included southern plantation elites, who were the mortal enemies of the liberal-labor coalition. True, there were liberals (often called reformers) before the New Deal, and they sometimes worked with unions, but many of the reformers were still Progressive Republicans, and the unions did not like social policies that brought the federal government into the picture until well into the depression.

When we compare the corporate-conservative and liberal-labor coalitions, we can safely say the former is more organized than the latter. However, this kind of a claim is still too strong for historians like Gabriel Kolko and his students, who claim business is highly fragmented (e.g., Kolko 1963; Vittoz 1987; Gordon 1994), or for those participants in the power elite who see nothing but chaos and personal rivalry all around them. To accommodate their concerns, we can approach the point about organization in terms of how the world looks from the individual viewpoint: the corporate-conservative coalition is slightly less disorganized, confused, and shortsighted than its opponents. Both sides, that is, are made up of struggling, muddled, egotistical individuals. However, when it comes to the exercise of power, either perspective adds up to the same conclusion. The corporate-conservative coalition generally is more cohesive than the liberal-labor one. From a sociological point of view, the Kolko school of business history and the participant-observers in the power elite are letting the day-to-day noise of rhetoric and personal ambition obscure the stability of the class and institutional structure of American society.

* * * *

When we look at the issues dividing the two coalitions, they add up to what is meant by class conflict, because they involve fundamentally opposed views on how the revenues taken in by corporations, plantations, and other profit-making entities that employ wage labor should be divided up. The liberal-labor coalition wants the corporate rich to pay higher wages to workers and higher taxes to government. The corporate-conservative coalition rejects these two objectives completely, claiming they endanger the freedom of individuals and the workings of the free market. The desire for higher wages and bigger government social programs leads the liberal-labor coalition to take two organizational steps. The first is unionization of the work force, which is opposed vehemently by the corporate-conservative coalition in every way possible. The second is politics, which takes place in the liberal wing of the Democratic party because of the great difficulties in sustaining a third party in a presidential system that also elects legislators from districts (i.e., a series of "winner-take-all" elections makes a vote for a liberal third party a vote for the coalition's least favorite (Republican) choice between the two major parties due to the fact that it is one less vote for the Democratic candidate).

One of the political demands made of the state by the liberal-labor coalition—help in unionizing—is in my view the single most important factor in determining the antigovernment stance of the corporate-conservative coalition. Despite all that the state does for the corporate-conservative coalition in promoting and subsidizing businesses, and in providing protection for private property, it is nonetheless viewed with suspicion and watched with care by the power elite because it is a real threat to corporate control of labor markets, either by employing unemployed workers or supporting unionization.[2] Fear of losing control of labor markets, I believe, is the power issue that links class conflict to the antigovernment orientation of the power elite.

The fundamental differences of opinion on unions and government aid to unionization also allow us to distinguish between corporate experts in the policy-planning network and liberal experts.

Notes

1. I will not count affiliates of university research institutes as corporate experts because they are employees of universities. However to see how the Russian Research Institute at Harvard University was controlled by the Carnegie Corporation on key issues, see O'Connell (1989).
2. Welfare is the conservative solution to unemployment, given begrudgingly only in times of disruption, always accompanied by stigmatization and victim-blaming in order to reinforce work norms (Piven and Cloward 1971). Liberals much preferred government employment to welfare during the New Deal, but lost to conservatives on the issue (Rose 1994: 53–56, 77–80).

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Chapter 11

Regulating the Lives of Women

Mimi Abramovitz

Building on the Marxist analysis of capitalism and the radical feminist analysis of patriarchy, socialist feminism maintains that the state is neither a neutral mediator of interest group conflict nor simply pro-capital. Rather, the state protects the interests of both capital and patriarchy by institutionalizing capitalist class and property relations and upholding patriarchal distinctions. According to Zillah Eisenstein,

> The formation of the state institutionalizes patriarchy; it reifies the division between public and private life as one of sexual differences. . . . The domain of the state has always signified public life and this is distinguished in part from the private realm by differentiating men from women. . . . The state formalizes the rule by men because the division of public and private life is at one and the same time a male-female distinction. . . . The state's purpose is to enforce the separation of public and private life and with it the distinctness of male and female existence.[1]

The state protects capitalism and patriarchy by enforcing their respective requirements, but also by mediating any conflicts that arise from the state's simultaneous commitment to both. The state steps in to create order and cohesion, especially when the heterogeneous and frequently divided dominant class cannot agree on how best to resolve these tensions.[2]

Including patriarchy complicates the otherwise useful analysis of the origins and development of the welfare state put forward by Gough, Dickinson, O'Connor, and other contemporary Marxists who suggest that the welfare state operates to mediate conflicts between the capitalist requirements of production and reproduction. They see the welfare state as assisting capitalist accumulation and the legitimacy of the prevailing social order by assuring the reproduction of the labor force, maintaining society's non-working members, and securing the social peace. If Marxism argues that the welfare state arose to mediate reproductive relations on behalf of the productive needs of capital, socialist feminism holds that the welfare state originated to meet the changing requirements of patriarchy *and* capitalism and to mediate their conflicts. Drawing on various parts of the socialist-feminist discourse, a new but far from singular and still incomplete perspective can be envisioned, which suggests that the origins and functions of the welfare state represent not only the need to reproduce and maintain the labor force, as observed by the Marxists, but also to uphold patriarchal relations and to regulate the lives of women. From this perspective, the welfare state operates to uphold patriarchy and to enforce female subordination in both the spheres of production and reproduction, to mediate the contradictory demands for women's home and market labor, and to support the nuclear family structure at the expense of all others.

Upholding patriarchal control in the family and the market

Socialist feminists maintain that state intervention in work and family life reflects the changing requirements of patriarchy as well as those of capitalism and the historical intervention of the state on behalf of "proper" family life. Both Brown and Ursel[3] argue that the advance of capitalism gradually shifted the center of patriarchal control from the private family headed by a man to the state. In pre-industrial society, where the household was both the productive and reproductive unit, patriarchal authority was private or familial (i.e., grounded in the gender organization of the family). Public or social patriarchy, rooted in the state, was more facilitative than direct, providing only the structural supports for private patriarchy in the home. By law, custom, and economics, male heads of household controlled the labor of women and other family members as well as their access to most economic resources. Marriage, property, inheritance, and public and laws were local and operated primarily to enforce such control by the patriarch who, in turn, was obliged to maintain the nuclear family and women's place in the home.

Public or social patriarchy became stronger as the rise of industrial capitalism began to weaken the economic and political underpinnings of male authority. The separation of production and reproduction, the growth of factories, the creation of a wage labor force (which employed women and children as well as men), and the emergence of new ideas about individual freedom, equality, and opportunity shifted the basis of patriarchal authority from the male head of household to the employer and the state. As market relations slowly lessened men's ability to control the labor of family members and increased their wives' and children's access to economic resources, familial patriarchy alone no longer sufficed to maintain male domination and the gender division of labor.

The decline of patriarchal authority modified the state's relationship to private family life. As familial patriarchy gave way to social or public patriarchy, the state assumed regulatory functions that were previously confined to the family, including greater regulation of marriage, inheritance, child custody, and employment.[4] The growth of the social welfare system and its "reform" in the early nineteenth century also marked the shift from familial to social patriarchy, at least for the poor. The transition, signaled by an attack on public aid (outdoor relief) and the rise of institutional care (indoor relief), made public aid very harsh and punitive. The Marxist explanation of these "reforms" suggests that state-regulated deterrence became necessary to discipline the newly industrialized labor force. The feminist analysis adds that the social welfare changes also operated to enforce new ideas about proper family life. Punitive relief programs assured that women chose any quality of family life over public aid. Welfare recipients whose families did not comply with prevailing norms were considered undeserving and treated even more poorly by the system. Given women's responsibility for maintaining the home, poor, immigrant, and female-headed households suspected of being unable to properly socialize their children were frequently defined as unworthy of aid. If an institutional placement resulted, it could tear "undeserving" families apart, often for reasons of poverty alone.

In the early twentieth century, the entry of more women into the labor force challenged patriarchal patterns and was viewed as competitive with men. The new labor and social welfare legislation that emerged enforced the gender division of labor and otherwise reasserted patriarchal structures in the family and the market. Protective labor laws, Mothers' Pension programs, and other new social legislation excluded women from the labor market and relegated them to the home, where they worked to reproduce and maintain the labor force. These and other laws also supported a sex-segregated occupational structure

and established male-dominated hierarchies at the workplace (which mirrored and reinforced those already in place in the home).

During the rest of the twentieth century, the expanding welfare state continued to support patriarchal dominance while mediating reproductive relations on behalf of the productive needs of capital. The emergence of the modern welfare state, marked by the enactment of the 1935 Social Security Act, signaled the institutionalization of public or social patriarchy. Instead of simply assuming patriarchal control, the state began to systematically subsidize the familial unit of production through the provision of economic resources to the aged, the unemployed, and children without fathers. The major income maintenance programs of the Social Security Act also incorporated patriarchal family norms. They each presumed and reinforced marriage, the male breadwinner/female homemaker household type, and women's economic dependence on men. Mary McIntosh[5] points out that even the special programs for female heads of households indirectly buttressed the ideal family type by substituting the state for the male breadwinner. By helping this "deviant" family approximate the "normal" one, programs for female-headed families "solved" one of patriarchy's major problems, that of the so-called broken home or female-headed home. At the same time, the program's low benefits and stigma penalized husbandless women for their departure from prescribed wife and mother roles. This kept unmarried motherhood and the breakup of the two-parent family from appearing too attractive to others. Until very recently, when they began to falter in this regard, the programs of the Social Security Act implicitly supported family structures that conformed to the patriarchal model and penalized those that did not. The historical intervention by the state on behalf of "proper" family life suggests the family's importance to the survival of capitalism and patriarchy. Indeed, families absorb the cost and responsibility for bearing and socializing the next generation, for managing consumption and other household matters, for organizing sexual relations, for providing care to the aged, sick, and young who cannot work, and for producing income to meet all of these needs. The 1980 attack on the welfare state can be understood partly as an effort to restore the ability of the welfare state to uphold traditional patriarchal arrangements in the face of recent threats derived from major changes in both the family system and the political economy.

Regulating the labor of women

Socialist feminists agree with contemporary Marxists that the welfare state helps assure the reproduction of the labor force and the maintenance of the non-working members of the population, but they stress that, from the start, programs serving women have had a more complicated role. The activities necessary to secure the physical, economic, and social viability of the working class depend heavily on women's unpaid domestic labor, as do prevailing patriarchal family patterns, but because this competes with capital's ongoing demand for women's low-paid market labor, socialist feminism forces us to see that the welfare state must regulate the lives of women in a unique way.

The demands for women's domestic and market labor have contradicted each other since the separation of household and market production in the early nineteenth century. Women's domestic labor assures capital fit, able, and properly socialized workers on a daily and a generational basis, as well as the care of those unable to work. This unpaid domestic labor absorbs the costs that industry or government would otherwise have to pay to reproduce and maintain a productive labor force. Women's domestic labor also reinforces

patriarchal arrangements. It relieves individual men of household tasks, services their physical, sexual, and emotional needs, keeps women economically dependent, stops them from competing with men in the job market, and defines women's place in the home. By the end of the colonial period, however, capital's need for cheap market labor had combined with the impoverishment of the working class to draw increasingly large numbers of women into the wage labor market. Paradoxically, their entry conflicted with the benefits received by capital from women's unpaid domestic labor. Combined with fewer marriages and more female-headed households, the growing labor force participation of women, which held the possibility of greater economic independence, also contained a challenge to male dominance and patriarchal family patterns.

Socialist feminism argues that, from colonial times to the present, social welfare programs serving women have had to deal with these contradictory pulls. Given the twin benefits of female labor, the welfare state, in most historical periods, has played a central role in mediating the resulting conflict, especially among poor and working-class women. As this book details, social welfare policies have always regulated the lives of women, channelling some into the home to devote full time to reproducing and maintaining the labor force and others into the labor market, where they also create profits for capital. By distinguishing among women as "deserving" and "undeserving" of aid, the policies also reinforced divisions among women along lines of race, *class,* and marital status.

Arena of struggle

Like some Marxists, some socialist feminists conclude that the paradoxes of the welfare state make it a productive arena for feminist as well as class struggle. On the one hand, welfare state policies assist capital and patriarchy by reproducing the labor force, regulating the competing demands for female labor, enforcing female subordination, maintaining women's place in the home, and sustaining the social peace. On the other hand, welfare state benefits threaten patriarchal arrangements. They redistribute needed resources, offer non-working women and single mothers a means of self-support, and provide the material conditions for the pursuit of equal opportunity. Welfare state benefits that help women to survive without male economic support subsidize, if not legitimize, the female-headed household and undermine the exclusivity of the male-breadwinner, female-homemaker family structure. As a social wage, welfare state benefits increase the bargaining power of women relative to men. Eisenstein[6] argues that the very existence of the welfare state, especially its deep involvement in family life, is potentially subversive to capitalism, liberalism, and patriarchy. Whether or not and how the welfare state carries out its abstract tasks or exposes its roots in patriarchal capitalism, however, is not predetermined. Rather, it reflects the degree of prevailing struggle over who (capital or labor) "pays" for these benefits and the extent to which the welfare state policies can be made to change rather than reproduce the conditions necessary to perpetuate patriarchal capitalism. In the final analysis, the outcome of the struggle reflects the relative power of the contesting forces at any moment in time.

The role of ideology: the family ethic and the regulation of women

The welfare state functions identified by socialist feminists are carried out, in part, by the codification of the family ethic or the ideology of women's roles in its rules and regulations. Indeed, the family ethic is one way in which the welfare state regulates the lives of women. Ideology, or the relatively coherent system of beliefs and values about human nature and

social life generated by a society for itself, is found in the realm of ideas, the actions of individuals, and the practices of societal institutions, including the welfare state. The power of ideology lies in its ability to influence the thinking and behavior of individuals, the practices of institutions, and the organization of society. In the case of women, the family ethic articulates expected work and family behavior and defines women's place in the wider social order. Embodied in all societal institutions, this dominant norm is enforced by the laws and activities of the state.

The family ethic derives from patriarchal social thought that sees gender roles as biologically determined rather than socially assigned and from standard legal doctrine that defines women as the property of men. It is grounded in the idea that natural physical differences between the sexes determine their differential capacities. The idea of natural differences between the sexes causes individuals to see their femininity and masculinity solely as part of human nature[7] rather than as the product of socialization. The sense of "naturalness" legitimizes socially constructed gender distinctions and enables individuals to participate, without question, in gender-specific roles. The implication that biology is destiny also obscures the historical impact of differential socialization and unequal opportunities on the choices made by individuals of different sexes, races, and ages. By making these choices seem natural and rational, the family ethic helps justify discrepancies between societal promises and realities, to rationalize prejudice, discrimination, and inequalities, and to promote the acquiescence of the oppressed in their oppression. Finally, the direct appeal to nature as the source of gender differences minimizes the cultural determination of women's sexuality, the significance of changes in women's position over time, and the importance of women's private domestic labor to both capitalist production and patriarchal arrangements.

Like most ideologies, the ideology of women's roles represents dominant interests and explains reality in ways that create social cohesion and maintain the status quo. The family ethic articulates and rationalizes the terms of the gender division of labor. Despite its long history, the linchpin of the family ethic – the assignment of homemaking and child care responsibilities to women – has remained reasonably stable.

A family ethic telling women about their proper place existed in colonial America. This preindustrial code placed women in the home and subordinate to the male head of household. Women were expected to be economically productive but to limit their productive labor to the physical boundaries of the home. Between 1790 and 1830, changes in the political economy that accompanied the rise of industrial capitalism caused a dramatic shift in women's roles. The emerging market economy removed production from the home and created gender-based separate spheres. As men took their place in the market, the work ethic followed them there, but the new "industrial family ethic" continued to define women's place as in the home.

The industrial family ethic resembled its colonial predecessor in many ways, except that it denied women a recognized productive role. Because it told women not to engage in market labor at all, the family ethic defined women's place as exclusively in the home. Reflecting the needs of the new social order, their domestic work included creating a comfortable retreat for the market-weary breadwinner, socializing children to assume proper adult work and family roles, managing household consumption, offering emotional nurturance to family members, caring for the aged and the sick, taming male sexuality, and providing moral guardianship to the family and the wider community. At the same time, and reflecting patriarchal rules, women were viewed as the "weaker sex" in need of male support and protection. The subordination of women became grounded in their economic dependence on men and in the law. The latter continued to define women as male property and to grant men control of women's labor and access to resources.

The idea of the family ethic draws on what other scholars have labeled the "cult of domesticity" or the "cult of true womanhood,"[8] but as developed here, the concept goes beyond earlier descriptions, to examine the codification of the ideology of women's roles in societal institutions and to analyze its regulatory powers. Indeed, the family ethic, which "protects" the white middle-class family, also operates as a mechanism of social regulation and control.

On the individual level, the family ethic keeps women in line. Fulfilling the terms of the family ethic theoretically entitles a woman to the "rights of womanhood," including claims to femininity, protection, economic support, and respectability. Non-compliance brings penalties for being out of role. Encoded in all societal institutions, the family ethic also reflects, enforces, and rationalizes the gender-based division of society into public and private spheres and helps downgrade women in both. The ideology of women's roles helps keep women at the bottom of the hierarchies of power in both the public and the private spheres.

Indeed, the idea that women belong at home has historically sanctioned the unequal treatment of women in the market. The resulting economic insecurity has channelled them back into the home. The need for women's domestic labor and the ideological presumption of a private sphere to which women rightfully belong has helped rationalize their subordination in the public sphere. When industry's need for inexpensive labor drew women out of their "proper place," the idea that they belonged in the home justified channelling them into low-paid, low-status, gender-segregated sectors of the economy and into jobs whose functions paralleled those tasks traditionally performed by women at home. Women's inability to earn a livable wage made men, marriage, and family life into a necessary and a more rational source of financial support. Lacking a material basis for independence, women easily became economically, if not psychologically, dependent on men, which in turn created the conditions for women's subordinate family role.

In brief, the family ethic, which locked women into a subordinate family role, also rationalized women's exploitation on the job. By devaluing women's position in each sphere, the ideology of women's work and family roles satisfied capital's need for a supply of readily available, cheap, female labor. By creating the conditions for continued male control of women at home and on the job, the economic devaluation and marginalization of women also muted the challenge that increased employment by women posed to patriarchal norms.

Targeted to and largely reflecting the experience of white, middle-class women who marry and stay home, the family ethic denied poor and immigrant women and women of color the "rights of womanhood" and the opportunity to embrace the dominant definition of "good wife" and mother because they did not confine their labor to the home.[9] Forced by dire poverty to work for wages outside of the home, they also faced severe exploitation on the job, having to accept the lowest wages, longest hours, and most dangerous working conditions. Instead of "protecting" their femininity and their families' social respectability, the notion of separate spheres placed poor and immigrant women and women of color in a double bind at home and reinforced their subordinate status in the market. Separate spheres, which recognized and sustained the household labor that white women performed for their families, offered no such support to non-white women.[10] Both Dill and Glenn point out that society's treatment of women of color clearly indicated that their value as laborers took precedence over their domestic and reproductive roles. On all fronts, the families of poor and immigrant women and women of color experienced a series of assaults not faced by middle-class white women.

Perhaps this is why some of the families of poor, employed, husbandless, immigrant women and women of color tried so hard to comply with the terms of the family ethic. Indeed, working-class men struggled to keep their wives at home even when this involved

major sacrifices in the organization and comfort of their family life. To stay out of the labor force, working-class women typically limited family consumption, sent their children to work, sacrificed the privacy of their homes to take in boarders, increased the production of household goods and/or took in paid piece-work, which burdened their already long work day.[11]

The ideology of women's roles is deeply encoded in social welfare policy. It is well-known that social welfare laws categorize the poor as deserving and undeserving of aid based on their compliance with the work ethic, but, as this book suggests, the rules and regulations of social welfare programs also treat women differentially according to their perceived compliance with the family ethic. Indeed, conforming to the ideology of women's roles has been used to distinguish among women as deserving or undeserving of aid since colonial times. Assessing women in terms of the family ethic became one way the welfare state could mediate the conflicting demands for women's unpaid labor in the home and her low-paid labor in the market, encourage reproduction by "proper" families, and otherwise meet the needs of patriarchal capitalism. Recognizing the role of the family ethic in social welfare policy permits us to uncover the long-untold story of the relationship between women and the welfare state.

Notes

1. Zillah Eisenstein, *Feminism and Social Equality* (N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 92.
2. Eisenstein, 89–92.
3. Jane Ursel, "The State and the Maintenance of Patriarchy" in James Dickinson and Bob Russell (eds.), *Family, Economy, & State* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 154–156, 157.
4. Ursell, 158.
5. Mary McIntosh, "The State and the Oppression of Women" in Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe (eds.), *Feminism and Materialism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).
6. Zillah Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (N.Y.: Longman, 1981), 104–105.
7. Julie A. Matthaei, *An Economic History of Women in America* (N.Y.: Shocken Books, 1982), 3–7.
8. See, for example: Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820–1860" in Michael Gordon (ed.), *The American Family in Socio-Historical-Perspective* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 313–333; Barbara Epstein, "Industrialization and Femininity" in Rachel Kahn-Hut, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and Richard Colvard (eds.), *Women and Work* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1982), 88–100; Barbara J. Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1983), 32–72; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1982).
9. Bonnie Thornton Dill, *Our Mothers' Grief* (Memphis: Center for Research On Women, Memphis State University, Research Paper 4, 1986), 48–9.
10. Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Racial Ethnic Women's Labor," *Review of Radical Political Economics*. 17, 3 (Fall 1985): 86–109.
11. Dill, 15.

Chapter 12

Racial Politics and the Racial State

Michael Omi and Howard Winant

> *"[H]istorical reality is completely obfuscated in the myth of an all-inclusive contract creating a sociopolitical order presided over by a neutral state equally responsive to all its colorless citizens."*
>
> —Charles W. Mills[1]

Introduction

Race is consummately political. The instability of the race concept and the controversies it generates are emblematic of the racially contradictory society in which we live. In the United States, a system of racial rule has always been in place, operating not merely through macro-level, large-scale activities, but also through micro-level, small-scale practices. The racial regime is enforced and challenged in the schoolyard, on the dance floor, on talk radio, and in the classroom as much as it is in the Supreme Court, electoral politics, or on the battlefield of Helmand province. Because racial formation processes are dynamic, the racial regime remains unstable and contested. We cannot step outside of race and racism, since our society and our identities are constituted by them; we live in racial history.

Race is a vast and variegated theme. Any racial theory is a work-in-progress. Race is a factor not only in politics and history, but also in economy, culture, experience . . .; it is a fully-fledged *social fact* like class or gender. Like those other large markers race is an unstable set of *collective representations* as well.[2] We focus here on racial politics and the racial state because through politics, through struggles over power and freedom, we can see race and racism being remade both social structurally and experientially. What we call racial projects have interacted over half a millennium to build up the *social structures* of race and racism. A parallel *experiential dimension* exists as well: The short-term, present-tense experience of racial subjectivity, in which new racial projects are being launched and interacting all the time.[3]

Looking at racial politics in general and the racial state in particular also allows us to consider the state–civil society distinction: The state may represent the core of a given racial regime, but no state can encompass all of civil society. People conceive of, operate, and inhabit their own racial projects (within broader constraints) and "experience" race in distinct and varied ways.

To theorize racial politics and the racial state, then, is to enter the complex territory where structural racism encounters self-reflective action, the radical pragmatism of people of color (and their white allies) in the United States[4] It is to confront the instability of the U.S. system of racial hegemony, in which despotism and democracy coexist in seemingly permanent conflict. It is to understand that the boundary between state and civil society is necessarily porous and uncertain where race is concerned. Emphasizing the political dimensions of race and racism allows us to discern the contours of the racial system, to understand what racial hegemony looks like, to specify its contradictions, and to envision alternative scenarios.

Racial politics are bigger than the state. They involve civil society, political socialization and thus race-consciousness, racial identity-making (both individual- and group-based), and group boundary formation (Barth, ed. 1998 [1969]) as well. The enmeshment of the state in our everyday lives means that all racial identities are contradictory and "hybrid"; it means that uncertain group boundaries are regulated and often tightened and enforced by the state. We make our racial identities, both individually and collectively, but not under conditions of our own choosing.

Racial formation theory approaches politics as an uneasy combination of despotic and democratic practices, of self-reflective action undertaken both with and against established social structures.

By *despotism* we refer to a familiar series of state practices: deprivation of life, liberty, or land; dispossession, violence, confinement, coerced labor, exclusion, and denial of rights or due process. The contemporary United States, and the colonial societies that preceded it in North America, were founded on these and related forms of despotism, all organized according to race. Although racial oppression has lessened over the years, and although some of these despotic practices have been significantly reduced if not eliminated (slavery is a good example here), others continue unabated and in some cases have even increased. For example, carceral practices today rival or exceed any previous period in both the proportions and absolute numbers of black and brown people held in confinement. The little-noticed development of a whole gulag of specialized immigration prisons has no precedent in U.S. history.

All right then, how about the *democratic dimensions* of the racial state? Though it is a constant and prominent feature of the racial state, despotism is not the only story that the state tells about race. "Freedom dreams" (Kelley 2003) rooted in racial politics are among the most enduring contributions to the foundation of democracy in the modern world; these "dreams" have constantly challenged the state, most famously in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s August 1963 speech, but on numerous other occasions as well. In fact the persistence and depth of social justice-oriented movements has been the chief source of popular democracy and indeed popular sovereignty in the United States. What W.E.B. Du Bois called "abolition democracy" is a clear instance of that movement challenge. In Du Bois's view, the American Revolution of 1776–1781 was only a partial and incomplete anti-imperial transformation, since it was dominated by elites and left slavery intact. The Civil War, and Reconstruction, abortive as it was, were the second phase of the American Revolution, based upon the expansion of the rights that abolition implied: the achievement by all of complete democracy and full citizenship (Du Bois 2007 [1935] 186; see also Lipsitz 2004; Davis 2005, 73–74).

To be sure, democratic movements have often been foreclosed by state-based coercion, as well as by reactionary practices based in civil society: mob violence and lynching, for example. Only under some circumstances has open and "free" political mobilization for democratic reform been possible for people of color: The two great moments of this mainstream political upsurge were, of course, the Reconstruction period (1865–1877) and the post-World War II civil rights period (1948–1970). At other times democratic political action had to take shape quite autonomously, beneath the radar of the state (and often beneath the social scientific radar as well). This suggests the subaltern character of racial democracy.[5]

* * * *

From War of Maneuver to War of Position

There has been a racial system in North America since the earliest days of contact with and conquest by Europeans. This system has linked political rule to the racial classification of individuals and groups. The major institutions and social relationships of U.S. society—law,

political organization, economic relationships, religion, cultural life, residential patterns—have been structured from the beginning by this system.

Clearly, the system was more monolithic, more absolute, at earlier historical moments. Despite its epochal revolutionary origins, the early U.S. maintained many of the residues of the absolutist system of monarchical rule from which it had emerged. Empire, slavery, and patrimonialism were some of these "birthmarks." Having thrown off the shackles of the British empire, "the first new nation" (Lipset 2003 [1963]) proceeded to establish itself as an empire of its own, seizing the land and labor of native peoples of North America (Kaplan 2005; Stoler, ed. 2006;). Having declared itself subject to a natural law in which "all men [sic] are created equal," the United States quite comprehensively disobeyed that law in practice: not only through its support for hereditary chattel slavery, but also through its severe restrictions on democratic participation.[6] The American Revolution was in many respects triggered by trade restrictions imposed by the "mother country";[7] the insurgent colonies were merchant capitalist, not yet industrial capitalist. They were patrimonial systems that were still marked by feudalism (Adams 2005). Not only did romantic racist ideology justifying slavery develop out of this political-economic complex—the plantation owner as the father, the slaves as children—but also the chattelization of both slaves and women was operating here (Pateman 1988; Mills 1999). Furthermore, because there was very little industrial production in the early decades of the nation's existence, property-less white men were uncertain about their status. The main "workers" were slaves, and white men, unwilling to accept the quasi-feudal status of "servant," were determined to distinguish themselves from slaves at all costs. David Roediger (2007 [1991]) finds deep roots for later U.S. racism in this unstable and conflictual situation. What about the slaves themselves? The 1790 census—the first ever taken in the country—counted roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population as enslaved (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1791). In Virginia, the principal slaveholding state of the time, the enslaved population was around 40 percent of the total.

Thus policing and controlling the enslaved population was a particular concern, especially in the South, where slaves were concentrated and represented the main source of labor. The U.S. Constitution reflected extensive experience in the surveillance and punishment of slaves, experience that had been acquired by Europeans over 250 years of colonization before the Constitution was even promulgated. Protection for "the peculiar institution" was provided by the document in numerous ways: notably in its provision for the return of escaped slaves, and in its ignominious "three-fifths clause," whereby the enslaved population, though obviously unrepresented in the legislature, could yet be counted as a component of the population for purposes of legislative enumeration.

For most of U.S. history, state racial policy's main objective was repression and exclusion. Congress' first attempt to define American citizenship, the Naturalization Law of 1790, declared that only free "white" immigrants could qualify. A persistent pattern of disenfranchisment targeted people of color. Before the Civil War, "free persons of color" were stripped of their right to vote—the key to citizenship status—in many states. The extension of eligibility to all racial groups has been slow indeed. Japanese, for example, could become naturalized citizens only after the passage of the McCarran–Walter Act of 1952.[8]

The state plays a crucial part in racialization, the extension of racial meaning to a previously racially unclassified relationship, social practice or group. Throughout the 19th century, many state and federal laws recognized only three racial categories: "white," "Negro," and "Indian." In California, the influx of Chinese and the debates surrounding the legal status of Mexicans provoked a brief juridical crisis of racial definition. California attempted to resolve this dilemma by classifying Mexicans and Chinese within the already existing framework of "legally defined" racial groups. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848),

Mexicans were accorded the political-legal status of "free white persons," a fig-leaf placed by the U.S. conquerors over the realities of Mexican *mestizaje* and slave emancipation. State racialization of Asians was even more baroque: In 1854 the newly established California Supreme Court ruled in *People v. Hall* (CA Supreme Court 1854) that Chinese should be considered "Indian"[!] and denied the political rights accorded to whites.[9]

But even at its most oppressive, the racial order was unable to arrogate to itself the entire capacity for the production of racial meanings or the racial subjection of the population. Racially defined "others"—people of color—were always able to counterpose their own cultural traditions, their own forms of organization and identity, to the dehumanizing and enforced "invisibility" imposed by the majority society. As the voluminous literature on black culture under slavery shows, black slaves developed cultures of resistance based on music, religion, African traditions, and family ties, among other political technologies. By these means they sustained their own ideological project: the development of a "free" black identity, a sense of "peoplehood," and a collective dedication to emancipation.[10] Similar processes of cultural resistance developed among Native Americans, Latin@s, and Asians.[11]

Without reviewing the vast history of the U.S. racial order, it is still possible to make some general comments about the manner in which this order was historically consolidated. Gramsci's distinction between "war of maneuver" and "war of position" will prove useful here. In his account, *war of maneuver* is the form of politics appropriate to conditions of dictatorship or despotism, when no terrain is available for opposition inside the system. Resistance to the regime mobilizes outside the political arena, in the hinterlands, the slums and barracoons, the places of worship, the fields and mines and other workplaces, everywhere the subaltern strata are gathered. Once it has acquired the necessary force, resistance moves to the key locus of power, the capital, and seizes the key redoubts (the Bastille, the Winter Palace) from which oppressive power has been exercised.

War of position, by contrast, is the political form appropriate to hegemonic systems of rule that operate by incorporating their opposition, at least up to a point. Modern mass societies of both the fascist and the democratic type are the kinds of political systems Gramsci has in mind. Resistance to fascism combines the two forms of politics. Democratic states may be quite restrictive, but they still generally provide some space for challenge from within: legislative, electoral, or judicial processes, for example. In such societies the state is fortified (Gramsci calls it a system of "trenches")[12] by structures of legitimation and consent against insurrection or other direct challenges. The task faced by any oppositional movement engaged in a "war of position" is to delegitimate the hegemonic system and to erode or undermine consent. By rearticulating political and cultural "common sense" in such a way that the excluded, oppressed, and exploited sectors of society can achieve their own legitmacy, their own inclusion, the opposition develops *counter-hegemony*. It seeks to attain the rights, justice, and political power that its supporters had earlier been denied. "War of position" is thus a prolonged struggle for the adherence of the general population and the achievement of political power, generally without insurrection or armed struggle.[13]

For much of American history, no political legitimacy was conceded to alternative or oppositional racial projects. The absence of democratic rights, of material resources, and of political and ideological terrain upon which to challenge the monolithic character of the racial order, forced racially defined opposition both outward, to the margins of society, and inward, to the relative safety of self-defined communities. Slaves who escaped to the North or Canada, or who formed maroon communities in forests and swamps; Indians who made war on the United States in defense of their peoples and lands; Chinese and Filipin@s who drew together in Chinatowns and Manilatowns in order to gain some measure of collective

control over their existence—these are some examples of the movement *outward,* away from political engagement with the racial state.

These same blacks, Indians, Asians (and many others), banned from the political system and relegated to what was supposed to be a permanently inferior sociocultural status, were also forced *inward* upon themselves as individuals, families, and communities. Tremendous cultural resources were nurtured among such communities; enormous labors were required to survive and to develop elements of an autonomy and opposition under such conditions. These circumstances can best be understood as combining with the violent clashes and necessity of resistance (to white-led race riots, military assaults) which characterized these periods, to constitute a racial war of maneuver.

War of maneuver was gradually replaced by *war of position* as racially defined minorities achieved political gains in the United States.[14] A strategy of war of position can only be predicated on political struggle—on the existence of diverse institutional and cultural terrains upon which oppositional political projects can be mounted. To the extent that you can confront the racial state from within the political system, to the degree that you possess political "voice" (Hirschman 1971), you are fighting a war of position. Prepared in large measure by the practices undertaken under conditions of war of maneuver, black movements and their allies were able to make sustained strategic incursions into the mainstream political process during the post-World War II years. "Opening up" the state was a process of democratization which had effects both on state structures and on racial meanings. The postwar black movement, later joined by other racially based minority movements, challenged the dominant racial ideology in the United States, insisting upon a more egalitarian and democratic concept of race. The state was the logical target for this effort.

The Racial Body Politic

Race and racism both define and disrupt the body politic of the nation-state.[15] States occasionally become the instruments of necessarily genocidal attempts to attain that level of uniformity ("purity"), which is usually framed in racial terms.[16] But more often they must manage the heterogeneity of the body politic, operating on the continuum of despotism–democracy that we have discussed. Therefore racial difference and racial inequality are fundamental dimensions of social organization. This is something that reductionist theoretical approaches to race and racism *just can't explain*. There is a persistent tendency to recur to other, supposedly more fundamental social forces like class and culture/ethnicity, in the effort to explain the persistence and breadth of race. Such accounts always neglect or dismiss the embeddedness of race in the modern world.

Foucault's concept of "biopower"[17] addresses some of the problems of this sort of management. Though he developed it in his later work on sexuality, Foucault also applied this term to issues of race and racism, especially in regard to colonialism and empire. The biopower concept is useful here because it allows us to see the normalization and comprehensiveness of race and racism in the modern world (and most certainly in the U.S.). With Foucault, we challenge the idea—found everywhere in both scholarly work and common sense—that human differentiation according to race is somehow aberrant, and that racism is an irrational deviation from such immutable principles as individualism, "*liberté, égalité, fraternité,*" or the law of supply and demand. Foucault labels such accounts "scapegoat theories" of race. As Ann Laura Stoler writes,

> Scapegoat theories posit that under economic and social duress, particular subpopulations are cordoned off as intruders, invented to deflect anxieties, and conjured up pre-

> cisely to nail blame. For Foucault, racism is more than an *ad hoc* response to crisis: It is a manifestation of preserved possibilities, the expression of an underlying discourse of permanent social war, nurtured by the biopolitical technologies of "incessant purification." Racism does not merely arise in moments of crisis, in sporadic cleansings. It is internal to the biopolitical state, woven into the weft of the social body, threaded through its fabric.
>
> (1995, 69)

From this standpoint the "scavenger concept" of race also acquires new focus and emphasis. The ready availability of race as an "explanation" for deviance from some attributed norm becomes more intelligible when we recognize both the ease with which racial distinctions are made—their "ocularity"—and when we simultaneously admit the breadth and depth of racial awareness in American society. With these political tools in view, with an awareness of biopower handy and Foucault by your side, consider once again the raciality of the body politic: the endless list of attributed variation by race that pervades the United States, and much of the rest of the world as well. Variation by race in scores on the SAT test? In evacuation rates by race from hurricane-flooded New Orleans? In different racial groups' commitments to "hard work"? In criminal propensities? How about in common-sense beliefs about sexual proclivities across racially defined groups (consider the word "vanilla" in this context)? This list can go on for days.

The phrase "body politic," of course, refers not only to the collective body, the "nation" or its equivalents; it also refers to the politicized body. Here we are arguing that the phenomic dimensions of race are among the central components of this phenomenon. Race and racism not only politicize the social but render up the human body into the burning heart of the state as material for the social control. State racial policy is directed against the racial body, in such forms as surveillance, profiling, policing, and confinement. This racial body politic is also gendered and classed: State violence against black men—against poor, dark, mainly male bodies—is one of the most continuous and seemingly central aspects of the U.S. racial system. Women of color are also targeted, especially by violence, discrimination, and assaults on their reproductive rights (Harris-Perry 2011); profiling is everywhere (Glover 2009).

Much recent scholarship has properly been devoted to "performing race" (Kondo 1997). In parallel fashion, critical studies of racism tend to see it as something that can be "performed' or not; for example we are urged to "interrupt" racism, or to "ally" against racism. We consider that both these dimensions of race—race as "performance" and race as "phenomics"—must be synthesized if we are to conceive fully of the racial politics of civil society. To be sure there is no easy separation of the racial state from the racial dimensions of identity and everyday life.

The body is the person. It is not news that racism derives much of its energy from the effort to control racially marked bodies. Nor is it surprising that despotism operates on the racial body, assaulting it, confining it, and profiling it.[18] Whether traditional or modern, whether religious or corporate, whether super-exploiting immigrant workers, profiling "suspicious" persons ("stop and frisk"; "show me your papers"), whether enforcing the boundaries of neighborhood segregation, policing school hallways in neighborhoods of color (Nolan 2011)—again the list is long—the convergence between despotism and the racial body is comprehensive. For this reason—as well as for reasons of gender and sexuality—the right of all human beings to control their own bodies is a fundamental democratic demand.

The Radical Pragmatist Politics of Race

Racial formation theory draws a great deal from the pragmatist philosophical tradition. Pragmatist concepts of self and society are based on the core idea of *self-reflective action*. This term means that both individually and collectively we are self-consciously cognizant of the social forces in which we are immersed, and through which we steer our individual and collective selves.[19] Consider racial formation as a continuous process of this type. It is not only a struggle over the meaning of one's own racial identity within a particular social context and defined set of relationships; it is also a conflict over the terms of collective self-definition carried out in the shadow of the state and its biopolitical capabilities. In the post-World War II period, these struggles have taken place in explicitly political terms, as an ongoing "war of position" between racial despotism and racial democracy.

A radical pragmatist approach allows us to analyze the interaction of the racialized self and the racialized social structure. At the "micro-level," each racial self engages in a certain amount of sociopolitical "navigation," so to speak. This activity takes place in everyday life and in political life, and requires what might be called racial "intelligence." When one acts self-reflectively in respect to race, she or he links the racial conditions of everyday life with those of the overall social structure. Often this racial intelligence is taken for granted, but it is also self-conscious much of the time, especially for people of color.

At the "macro-level," the radical pragmatism of racial formation theory allows us to understand why even in the present—in the post-civil rights, neoliberal era—racial politics are so intractable, why they consist of simultaneous advances and setbacks. At some moments and during some periods, projects for collective self-definition assume the utmost importance, while at others they are in relative abeyance. Under some conditions, when mobilization is sufficient—say in 1963 Birmingham, Alabama—movements and organizations are able to intervene politically and act strategically on behalf of insurgent groups of color. More often, self-reflective political activity is diffused and sporadic, less frequently concentrated in mass political undertakings. The Birmingham campaign or the August 1963 March on Washington were exceptional moments of collective mobilization. But self-reflective action is always present to some degree.

The state also operates this way. Indeed a radical pragmatist approach to racial politics also allows us to see the "life of the state" as Gramsci describes it, as

> a continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria . . . between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups—equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail, but only up to a certain point, i.e., stopping short of narrowly corporate economic interest.
>
> (1971, 182)

The framework here is Marxian class analysis, but if we think about this processual notion of "the life of the state" from a racial point of view it closely parallels the pragmatist concept. The "fundamental group" may be seen as whites—or more properly whites and others who benefit from white supremacy and racism—while the "subordinate groups" are people of color and their allies who are incorporated into the "unstable equilibrium," but only "up to a point." Racial politics are unstable because state and opposition are both the targets and operators of intersecting racial projects. In the old days, the racial state could be more overt and violent. In the "post-civil rights" era, the racial state cannot merely dominate; it must seek *hegemony*. It does this in two related ways; first by incorporating "subordinate" groups: the "sub-" others, in other words the *subaltern;* and second by creating and embodying racial

"common sense," as we have discussed. Yet state violence, confinement, and aggressive and repressive policing of people of color all continue; this is how hegemony and subalternity are maintained: though a combination of repression and incorporation.

What is despotic, and what is democratic, about the U.S. racial state? Despite several historical "breaks"—when abolition of slavery, decolonization, and large-scale extensions of citizenship and civil rights took place—the contemporary world is still mired in the same racial history from which it originally sprang. The U.S. state was born out of white supremacy and still maintains it to a significant degree. Yet the state has been forced time and time again to make concessions to the racial "others": people of African descent, subjects of imperial conquest, indigenous people, and immigrants. The racial state has been transformed over and over in unending efforts to deal with its fundamental contradictions: Its concept of "freedom" included slavery. It is a racial despotism that also claims to be democratic. It is an empire that arose out of an anti-imperial revolution. It is a settler society (based on immigration) that is also exclusionist.

Colonial rule and slavocracy were systems whose fundamental political character was despotic. By seizure of territory, by kidnapping and theft, by coercive and authoritarian rule, Europe-based imperial regimes destroyed countless lives and sensibilities. No amount of rationalization, no invocation of themes of development and uplift, no efforts at historical relativization can justify these predations or deodorize their moral stink. So, racial politics and the racial state have their origins in the ravaging of the globe, in the consolidation of European rule, and in the classification of all humanity along racial lines. It is a bleak picture.

But not in every way. Racial politics also embody self-activity, resistance, and "situated creativity" (another pragmatist phrase; see Joas 1996). For the past half-millennium, refusal of slavery, resistance to colonialism, noncompliance with racial domination, fidelity to oppositional cultural traditions and alternative concepts of group and individual identity, and belief in racial solidarity have been some of the most crucial sources of insurgency, some of the central passions underlying emancipatory and democratic politics, both in the United States and around the world.

Trajectories of Racial Politics

What happens in racial politics when huge crises and racial "breaks"—matters of global and not just national significance for the most part—are *not* on the horizon? The 17 years of the Civil War/Reconstruction (1860–1877) and roughly 22 years (1948–1970) of the post-World War II racial "break" were exceptional periods. The brief and heroic latter period is now receding historically. . . .

Racial politics should be understood in terms of *trajectories*. In the post-World War II civil rights era and its aftermath, there have been a rising and a declining phase of this political trajectory. The trajectory proceeded from the relative abeyance of racial justice movements before the war; it was initiated during the war with the 1941 desegregation of the defense industries, and continued with the desegregation of the armed forces and the 1954 *Brown* decision; it reached its apogee with the upsurge of the civil rights, black power, and their allied movements in the 1960s. It began its decline after the adoption of civil rights reforms in the mid-1960s. A victim of its own (partial) success, the movement confronted the onset of racial reaction at the hands of the new right from about 1970 onward.

Applying Gramsci's approach, let us consider the U.S. racial system as an "unstable equilibrium." The idea of politics as "the continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria" has particular resonance in describing the operation of the racial state.

The racial system is managed by the state—encoded in law, organized through policy-making, and enforced by a repressive apparatus. But the equilibrium thus achieved is unstable, for the great variety of conflicting interests encapsulated in racial meanings and identities can be no more than pacified by the state. Racial conflict persists at every level of society, varying over time and in respect to different groups, but ubiquitous. Indeed, the state is itself penetrated and structured by the very interests whose conflicts it seeks to stabilize and control.[20]

Disruption and restoration of the racial order suggest the type of reiterative movement or pattern we designate by the term "trajectory." Both racial movements and the racial state experience such transformations, passing through periods of rapid change and virtual stasis, through moments of massive mobilization and others of relative passivity. While the movement and regime versions of the overall trajectory are independently observable, they could not exist independently of each other. Racially based political movements are inconceivable without the racial state, which provides a focus for political demands and structures the racial order. The racial regime, in turn, has been historically constructed by racial movements; it consists of agencies and programs which are institutionalized responses to racially based movements of the past.

Our concept of the trajectory of racial politics thus links the two central actors in the drama of contemporary racial politics—the racial state and anti-racist social movements, the "dominant" and "subordinate" groups in Gramsci's account—and suggests a general pattern of interaction between them. Change in the racial order, in the social meaning and political role played by race, is achieved only when the state has initiated reforms, when it has generated new programs and agencies in response to movement demands. Movements capable of achieving such reforms only arise when there is significant "decay" in the capacities of pre-existing state programs and institutions to organize and enforce racial ideology. Contemporary patterns of change in the racial order illustrate this point clearly.

Taken as a whole, the anti-racist movements of the post-World War II period constitute a broad democratic upsurge, whose goals were a wide aggregation of "freedom dreams" (Kelley 2003) that ranged from moderate (voting rights) to radical (socialist revolution, national liberation). The state response to this challenge sought to contain it through reforms that would substitute a system of racial *hegemony* for the previous system of racial *domination*. The various civil rights acts and court decisions of the 1960s incorporated movement opposition. This involved making tangible concessions without altering the underlying structural racism that was characteristic of the United States. It also meant the marginalization and in some cases destruction of those sectors of racial opposition that were unwilling to accept limited (aka "moderate") reforms.

After the dust had settled from the titanic confrontation between the movement's radical propensities and the "establishment's" tremendous capacity for incorporative "moderate" reform, a great deal remained unresolved. The ambiguous and contradictory racial conditions in the nation today result from decades-long attempts simultaneously to ameliorate racial opposition and to placate and sustain the *ancien régime raciale*. The unending reiteration of these opposite gestures, these contradictory practices, itself testifies to the limitations of democracy and the continuing significance of race in the United States.

Where are we located today on this trajectory? Were the incorporative reforms effective in defusing the anti-racist movement? Of course, they were; let's not have any illusions about that. But the political processes we are discussing here proceed forward in time, driven in part by the very limitations of the reforms that shaped them. The trajectory of racial politics continues. Perhaps perversely, or at least ironically, the reforms which curtailed racial inequality and injustice's most despotic features have worked to reinforce the production

and diffusion of "colorblindness" as the hegemonic U.S. racial ideology in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. . . .

This is the racial crisis of the early 21st century. "[C]risis," Gramsci wrote, "consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum, a great variety of morbid symptoms appear" (1971, 276). The significant advances made since World War II in overcoming the entrenched systems of U.S. racial despotism coexist with a system of ongoing racial stratification and injustice that manages to reproduce most of the conditions that have supposedly been abolished.

The Politicization of the Social

The race-based/anti-racism movements that arose after World War II were the first *new social movements* (Laraña, Johnston, and Gusfield, eds. 1994; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, eds. 2001). They were the first systematically to expand the concerns of politics to the social sphere, to the terrain of everyday life and emotional life.[21] New social movement politics would later prove "contagious," leading to the mobilization of other people of color, as well as other groups whose concerns were principally social. The new social movements were inspired by the black movement—particularly in the United States but all around the world as well (Mullings 2009). These movements challenged the more limited notions of politics that had shaped "mainstream" understandings. They vastly enlarged and qualitatively transformed the classical definition of politics: "Who gets what, when, and how" (Lasswell 1950 [1936]).

What distinguishes the post-World War II racial regime, and the anti-racist initiatives of the mid-20th century, from previous periods of racial despotism and earlier attempts to create racial democracy? Of course, no historical period is completely different from those that preceded it; all political systems, all racial projects, bear the "birthmarks" of their epochs of origin. Even a radical "break," like the one described by Du Bois in *Black Reconstruction,* or the post-World War II upheaval in racial dynamics—which was a worldwide phenomenon, not just a U.S. one—preserves within itself substantial components of what went before.

How could it be otherwise? Enslaved people of African descent may have sought freedom, and indeed fought and died for it with all their hearts, but they nevertheless remained wounded and brutalized by the system they succeeded in overthrowing. And that system, however much it had been laid waste by Sherman's armies, and however much it had been chastened by Lincoln's poignant warning in his Second Inaugural Address (1864) that

> if God wills that it [the War] continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and . . . every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether . . .,"

would still not emerge from the carnage and suffering of the Civil War as a truly free society.

The achievement of civil rights reforms was a great triumph, despite the limitations and compromises built into the reform legislation and the Supreme Court decisions involved (the *Brown* decision's "all deliberate speed" equivocation on desegregation was but one example of this). Yet the passage of civil rights laws in the mid-1960s was no more the creation of racial democracy than was the passage of civil rights laws in the late 1860s. The Supreme Court overturned the 1868 Civil Rights Act and other emancipatory

Reconstruction-era measures, just as it has eviscerated the 1960s civil rights laws in the decades since their enactment.[22] The achievement of slavery's abolition was at best a hint of what "abolition democracy"—that quasi-revolutionary ideal that Du Bois identified as the heart of slaves' auto-emancipation during the Civil War—would have involved: redistribution of land, severe punishment for rebellious Confederates. Civil rights are not the same as democracy. They do not spell the end of racism; indeed they are marked by racism's continuity, not its elimination.

Yet the post-World War II racial upheavals in the United States, the anti-racist movements of that epoch, did indeed achieve something new and unprecedented. This was the *politicization of the social*: the overflow of political meaning and awareness into the arena of everyday and emotional life, which had up to then been a largely "private" and depoliticized sphere. This terrain had previously been seen as largely irrational, disembodied, unrelated to politics, unconnected to power, and outside the purview of the state.

Emerging from the territory of the everyday, lived experience of racism, and indeed embedded with that experience, the anti-racist movement was all about the ways race was conceived, constructed, and practiced at both the macro-level of institutional arrangements and social structure and the micro-level of everyday social relationships. The modern civil rights movement, and its allied anti-racist movements, were struggles over these concepts, practices, and structures; they were conflicts about the *social meaning of race*. It was their incursion into the nation's political life, and their achievements within it, that created what we call The Great Transformation—the shifts in racial awareness, racial meaning, racial subjectivity that were brought about by the black movement. Race is not only a matter of politics, economics, or culture, but operates simultaneously on all these levels of lived experience. It is a pre-eminently social phenomenon that suffuses each individual identity, each family and community, and that also penetrates state institutions and market relationships.

After World War II, the black movement *politicized the social*. It asserted the "fact of blackness" (Fanon 1967), a realization that erupted like a volcano onto the sleeping village below. The village of American social life—that is, the white "mainstream" of segregated American society—was turned inside out by this "social fact" (Durkheim 2014) after centuries of white obliviousness and dormant racial insurgency. The rise of the black movement eclipsed the ethnicity-based model of race and instituted a new model based on new understandings—what we call *rearticulations*—of key sociopolitical pillars of U.S. "common sense": democracy, state, and identity.

Because it represented a critical upheaval in the meaning of race and a far more profound understanding of the dynamics of racism, the politicization of the social was linked to the two challenging paradigms of racial formation that we have discussed here: the class-based paradigm and the nation-based paradigm. But it was only linked in part. Yes, the class-based and nation-based approaches to race and racism shared a rejection of the "moderate" orientation of the ethnicity paradigm. This drew them together in their quest for a more radical anti-racist position, and it suggested a deeper critique of race and racism in everyday life. For example, some class-based theories of race focused on the *experience* of inequality and superexploitation (Oppenheimer 1974). Cultural nationalist politics and theory focused on community, customs, and *peoplehood*.

But the challenging paradigms could not grasp the larger significance of the racial politics of everyday life, the social psychological and experiential dimensions of the politicized social. The class-based and nation-based paradigms of race, though critical and radical, relied on more traditional forms of politics—on economic determinism and anti-colonialism respectively. Because they were limited by their reductionism of race, even the radical varieties of

the class-based and nation-based paradigms—Marxist accounts and internal colonialism accounts in particular—could not fully embrace the autonomy and *self-activity* of the new social movements.

We do not argue that the politicization of the social was a purely spontaneous phenomenon. Indeed it was *crafted* in part by movement activists and theorists, for example by Bayard Rustin (Rustin 2003 [1965]; D'Emilio 2004). We draw special attention, however, to the movement's ability to pay attention to its base, to "learn from its followers." This derived from its profound commitment to the complexities of race itself. This recognition of black "self-activity" (James et al. 2006 [1958]) bore a strong resemblance to the "situated creativity" highlighted in Dewey's political philosophy. We have discussed this *radical pragmatism of race*. The movement's immersion in the black religious tradition, its embrace of direct action, and its heteronomous adoption of such political tactics as the "sit-in" (based in the labor movement) and *satyagraha*/nonviolence (based in Gandhi's anti-colonial struggle in India; see Chabot 2011)[23] all undermined the racist barriers that had for so long separated the thoroughly racialized social life of American society from the exclusive white politics of the Jim Crow regime. A notable feature of the black movement's politicization of the social was the active role that youth, especially black youth, played in this transition. The willingness of young blacks to expose their bodies to the brutality of white racism—particularly in the South—was itself a rearticulation: a practical reinterpretation of the significance of the black body, as well as a defiance of the inherent violence of lynching.[24]

In short, racial identity, racial experience, racial politics, and the racial state itself were deeply transformed after World War II by the black movement and its allies. They were so profoundly reinvented and reinterpreted that the racial meanings established during this period continue to shape social and political life, even in the current period of reaction.

Furthermore, the politicization of the social spread across all of American life, highlighting the injustices, inequalities, and indignities that pervade U.S. society. The taken-for-granted unfreedom of women as a result of their sexual objectification and assumed unsuitability for the public sphere—in other words, the whole panoply of sexist practices and social structures—now became visible and a matter of contention, not only in the legislatures and courts but in the workplace and bedroom.[25] The assumed abnormality, perversion, deviance, and criminality of homosexuality—in other words, the unquestioned homophobia, ostracism, and discrimination experienced as a matter of course by anyone recognized as gay—now became a public political conflict, not only for those stigmatized as a result of their sexual identities, but for *everyone,* for the whole society.[26] Of course, these shifts did not take place overnight; they required years to unfold; indeed they are still very much sociopolitical battlefields and are likely to remain so, just as race and racism itself will remain a political "war zone," a field of profound conflict. But our point here is not that that these were "problems" that were "solved" in political life and everyday life. Indeed it is quite the opposite: that racism, sexism, and homophobia—and other society-wide conflicts as well—were *revealed and politicized* by the anti-racist movement that succeeded World War II. Henceforth these and related dimensions of injustice, inequality, and exclusion became public issues, ceasing forever to be relegated to the private and personal sphere, or worse yet, to be utterly denied and suppressed.

The radical upsurge of the anti-racist movement during the post-World War II years succeeded in disrupting white supremacy. It discredited the European immigrant-based model of race that had grounded ethnicity theory and had rationalized the racial "moderation" and complacency of white liberals. Anti-racist mobilization incentivized class-based and nation-based theories and analyses of race. But although the movement launched a new political trajectory of conflict and reform, neither of the two challenging viewpoints could achieve

hegemonic status. They suffered from serious deficiencies, largely because of their reduction of race to other phenomena. The subsequent waning of the class- and nation-based viewpoints and organizations, grounded in challenging paradigms left a vacuum in racial theory and politics. This vacuum permitted the racial state to adopt new techniques of violence and repression, working under the "law and order" ideology of the new right. This vacuum also created the political space for the rearticulation and containment of movement demands under the ideology of colorblindness.

Despite these serious setbacks, the depth and breadth of "the Great Transformation" can hardly be exaggerated. *The forging of new collective racial identities during the 1950s and 1960s has been the single most enduring contribution of the anti-racist movement*. It is a set of political resources that endures today as a central component of the struggle for democracy in the United States. Today, the gains won in the past have been rolled back in many respects. Many anti-racist movement organizations have been forced onto the defensive: Rather than demanding increased racial justice, they have had to fight to uphold welfare state policies and liberal reforms—affirmative action is perhaps the best example—that they once condemned as inadequate and tokenistic at best. The trajectory of racial politics continues, but now in a prolonged downturn. Amidst these reversals, the persistence of the politicized social, the continuity and strength of the new racial identities forged by the anti-racist movement, stands out as the most formidable obstacle to the consolidation of a repressive racial order. Apparently, the movements themselves could be fragmented, many of the policies for which they fought could be reversed, and their leaders could be coopted or even assassinated; but the racial subjectivity and self-awareness that they developed have taken permanent hold, and no amount of repression or cooptation can change that.

Notes

1. Mills 2008, 1989.
2. Durkheim's theoretical claims about social facts and collective representations are conveniently assembled and discussed in Durkheim 2014.
3. Concepts of the subject, subjection, and subjectivity are usefully deconstructed in Butler 1997a. The experience/structure framework parallels Mills's "sociological imagination" (2000 [1959]), and also Levi-Strauss's (1966) concept of social structure as simultaneously synchronic and diachronic. All three of these accounts share central pragmatist tenets as well.
4. The concepts of "situated creativity" and "self-reflective action" are core ideas in the radical pragmatism of John Dewey (1933, 1948 [1919]). A parallel concept can be found in C.L.R. James's idea of "self-activity" and in Grace Lee's early work. The term "self-activity" was introduced into the political lexicon in *Facing Reality,* a theoretical text by C.L.R. James, Grace Lee, Martin Glaberman, and Cornelius Castoriadis that appeared in the 1950s. Because "self-activity" cannot be delegated to others, it embodies radical democracy. The authors write:

   > The end toward which mankind is inexorably developing by the constant overcoming of internal antagonisms is not the enjoyment, ownership, or use of goods, but self-realization, creativity based upon the incorporation into the individual personality of the whole previous development of humanity. Freedom is creative universality, not utility.
   >
   > (2006 [1958], 58)

   The radical pragmatist (and arguably Deweyan) framework here is quite palpable. See also Rawick 1972; Lawson and Koch, eds. 2004. Lee (later Grace Lee Boggs), still active today at age 95, remains a leading anti-racist radical activist and author. She received her Ph.D. in 1940 with a dissertation on George Herbert Mead and has written on Dewey as well.
5. In U.S. race studies the subalternity argument goes back through Robin D.G. Kelley to the "hidden transcripts" of James C. Scott. Scott in turn drew on the "subaltern studies" school of Ranajit Guha, Partha Chatterjee,

and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, among others. The term "subaltern" comes from Gramsci. In our view, it pairs domination and "otherness," and thus addresses key race/racism issues. An important part of subalternity theories is the argument that it is difficult to govern subaltern peoples "all the way down." Implicitly, "below" normal politics there is a level of autonomy available to such groups and individuals, an "infrapolitical" terrain beneath the radar of white supremacy, colonialism, slavocracy, or other authoritarian regimes. This theme relates to the theme of race/racism as the "politicization of the social" that we discuss later in this chapter.

6. The American Revolution was a bourgeois revolution, in the sense that it overthrew a feudal system and established a system of rule by a property-holding class of "commoners." The revolution thus repudiated not only absolutism and "divine right" but also nobility and aristocracy. But because it occurred in the early stages of capitalism's development, it initially recognized only the democratic rights of established (male, white) property-holders. The founding fathers' distaste for the "rabble," the masses, even those who were white and male, is well-known. Later, as capitalism developed, political rights could be extended (gradually to be sure) to the "middling sorts": small (white, male) property-holders. See Beckert 2001.
7. This is true of almost all the American anti-colonial revolutions: Beginning in the early 19th century, local ("creole") elites—Bolivar, Juarez, San Martin—sought to throw off the restrictive commercial practices demanded by colonial administrations based in Europe. They wanted to control their own exports—largely primary products—and sell to the world market, a form of "free trade" much encouraged by the superpower of that century: Great Britain. The one exception here is Haiti and even that epochal struggle was partially trade-based.
8. The ideological residue of these restrictions in naturalization and citizenship is the popular equation of the term "American" with "white." The emergence of the "birther" phenomenon in the aftermath of Barack Obama's election in 2008 has been cited as evidence of this. As pundit Andrew Sullivan writes:

> The demographics tell the basic story: a black man is president and a large majority of white southerners cannot accept that, even in 2009. They grasp conspiracy theories to wish Obama—and the America he represents—away. Since white southerners comprise an increasing proportion of the 22% of Americans who still describe themselves as Republican, the GOP can neither dismiss the crankery nor move past it. The fringe defines what's left of the Republican center.
>
> (Sullivan 2009; see also Parker and Barreto 2013; Fang 2013)

9. For a comparative analysis of Mexican and Chinese experiences in 19th-century California see Almaguer 2008 [1994].
10. A brief selection of sources: Lester 1968a; Harding 1969; Rawick 1972; Gutman 1976; Aptheker 1983 (1963); Thompson 1983; Hahn 2003; Du Bois 2007 (1935).
11. The examples of Geronimo, Crazy Horse, and other Native American leaders were passed down from generation to generation as examples of resistance, and the Ghost Dance and Native American Church were employed by particular generations of Indians to maintain a resistance culture (Geronimo 2005 [1905]; Powers 2011; see also Snipp 1989). Rodolfo Acuña has pointed out how the same "bandits" against whom Anglo vigilantes mounted expeditions after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo—Tiburcio Vasquez and Joaquín Murieta are perhaps the most famous of these—became heroes in the Mexicano communities of the Southwest, remembered in folktales and celebrated in corridos (Acuña 2011 [1972]; see also Peña 1985). Chinese immigrants confined at Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay carved poetry in the walls of their cells, seeking not only to identify themselves and their home villages, but also to memorialize their experiences and to inform their successor occupants of those same places of confinement (Lai, Lim, and Yung 1991; Huang 2008). We do not offer these examples to romanticize repression or to give the air of revolutionary struggle to what were often desperate acts; we simply seek to affirm that even in the most uncontested periods of American racism, oppositional cultures were able, often at very great cost, to maintain themselves.
12. "The massive structures of the modern democracies, both as State organisations, and as complexes of associations in civil society, constitute for the art of politics as it were the 'trenches' and the permanent fortifications of the front in the war of position: they render merely 'partial' the element of movement which before used to be 'the whole' of war" (Gramsci 1971, 503).
13. Gramsci's elliptical language, required by imprisonment in fascist Italy, makes concise citation difficult. For more details of his approach to the war of maneuver/war of position concepts, see "State and Civil Society,"

in Gramsci 1971, 445–557. The entire work (itself an edited selection) is useful for the student of race and racism.

14. Our treatment here is necessarily very brief. The contemporary configuration of racial politics is a major subject later on in this work.
15. We confine ourselves here to the issue of political uses of the racial body, which is what we mean by "the racial body politic." Originally the phrase "body politic" referred to absolutist political frameworks, in which the sovereign's body was conceived as dual. A mortal individual, the sovereign's political body was also divine. As a result of divine right, it incorporated (note the bodily etymology of this term) his or her people as well. Only because sovereignty embodied the divine in the mortal, only because of "the king's two bodies" could it exercise absolute power (Kantorowicz 1957; see also Allen 2004, 69–84).
16. Eric D. Weitz (2003) has traced a whole series of 20th-century genocides back to the attempt, which he calls "utopian," to achieve racial (or quasi-racial) homogeneity in particular nations or empires.
17. This term refers to the making of political distinctions among human bodies. This happens according to gender and race most centrally, but in respect to other phenomic characteristics as well. Such distinctions are not merely imposed from outside, but are seen as intrinsic by their bearers; they thus become essential to the political-economic and cultural self-discipline Foucault calls "governmentality." He refers to biopower as a political technology—that is, an apparatus of rule and subjection—that took the shape of "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault 1990 [1978], 140). See also Butler 1997a.
18. Similar patterns can be discerned in efforts to control the gendered body and the queer body: abortion restriction, gay-bashing, and numerous other repressive practices are clear examples.
19. This definition imperfectly renders some organized principles of pragmatist thought, notably its democratic currents. These proceed from Dewey 1933; see also Joas 1996.
20. The main means available to the state for the equilibration of conflicting interests is precisely their incorporation into the state in the form of policies, programs, patronage, etc. Gramsci argues that various forms of hegemony flow from this process of incorporation: "expansive" hegemony if state–society relations display sufficient dynamism and are not inordinately plagued by crisis conditions; or "reformist" hegemony (what he calls "transformism") if political stability requires continuing concessions to competing forces.
21. This is not strictly true, of course. From the onset of racial slavery there has always been a ferocious social critique not only of slavery itself, but of racism too, although that term was not yet used. This is evident in the writings and speeches of Douglass, Wells, Cooper. "First-wave" feminism also possessed a social critique: It was about women's lives, not just about the vote.

    Yet our claim holds, because by and large the earlier movements were far more constrained by the very laws, customs and conventions that they sought to oppose, than were the post-World War II movements. The appeal that the modern civil rights movement exercised, its penetration into the everyday, its appeal to youth, its institutional base ("resource mobilization") were unprecedented in earlier cycles of protest. We address this topic at greater length in Chapter 6.
22. This may be yet another example of Myrdal's "cumulative and circular development." On the SCOTUS annulment of the 1960s civil rights laws and the undoing of the Warren Court's own liberal race jurisprudence, see Kairys 1994; Alexander 2012. On the undoing of the Radical Republican civil rights laws of the 1860s, see Kaczorowski 1987.
23. The movement's early assertion of nonviolent resistance linked it to anti-colonialism well before civil rights and antiwar politics fused in the later 1960s.
24. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote:

> In 1960 an electrifying movement of Negro students shattered the placid surface of campuses and communities across the South. The young students of the South, through sit-ins and other demonstrations, gave America a glowing example of disciplined, dignified nonviolent action against the system of segregation. Though confronted in many places by hoodlums, police guns, tear gas, arrests, and jail sentences, the students tenaciously continued to sit down and demand equal service at variety store lunch counters, and they extended their protest from city to city. Spontaneously born, but guided by the theory of nonviolent resistance, the lunch counter sit-ins accomplished integration in hundreds of communities at the swiftest rate of change in the civil rights movement

> up to that time. In communities like Montgomery, Alabama, the whole student body rallied behind expelled students and staged a walkout while state government intimidation was unleashed with a display of military force appropriate to a wartime invasion. Nevertheless, the spirit of self-sacrifice and commitment remained firm, and the state governments found themselves dealing with students who had lost the fear of jail and physical injury.
>
> The campuses of Negro colleges were infused with a dynamism of both action and philosophical discussion. Even in the thirties, when the college campus was alive with social thought, only a minority were involved in action. During the sit-in phase, when a few students were suspended or expelled, more than one college saw the total student body involved in a walkout protest. This was a change in student activity of profound significance. Seldom, if ever, in American history had a student movement engulfed the whole student body of a college.
>
> Many of the students, when pressed to express their inner feelings, identified themselves with students in Africa, Asia, and South America. The liberation struggle in Africa was the great single international influence on American Negro students. Frequently, I heard them say that if their African brothers could break the bonds of colonialism, surely the American Negro could break Jim Crow.
>
> (King 2001, 137–138; see also MLK Jr Research and Education Institute n.d.)

It is also vital to note the key role of Ella Baker in the emergence of the student-based components of the movement: in the 1960 Greensboro sit-ins and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In the 1964 Freedom Summer, students were the key activists (Carson 1995 [1981]; Ransby 2005).

25. The origins of "second-wave" feminism have been linked to the analyses and practice of key women activists in the civil rights movement. See Echols 1989; Curry 2000; Breines 2007.
26. Here too Bayard Rustin must be acknowledged. As a gay man Rustin was marginalized and discriminated against in the movement he did so much to found. See Rustin 2003; D'Emilio 2004.

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Chapter 13

Domhoff, Mills, and Slow Power

Robert J.S. Ross

When he adopted the term "power elite" to characterize those who rule America, G. William Domhoff became, de facto, the most important carrier of the legacy of C. Wright Mills. When he sustained the analysis of the class and institutional bases and origins of that elite, Domhoff's ideas evolved in ways which enriched, corrected and neglected aspects of Mills' insights. All this despite his sometimes-tortuous attempts to claim separation, if not divorce.

Domhoff's essay in this volume is a meticulous rehearsal of the theoretical issues among critical scholars of power of the past thirty to fifty years, and a look at the responses (and nonresponses) to his work among more conventional scholars. This essay places Domhoff's research and writing in the context of Mills' views and his attitudes towards Marxism. (Mills 1956).

Mills' Power Elite

As Domhoff amply notes, Mills understood power to be exercised in modern society by large bureaucratic organizations. The implications of such a view of the institutional means of power became central to Mills' theory: those at the top of the hierarchies—and hardly any others—are the powerful. The institutional orders, as Mills called them, were the corporate economy, the military, and what he termed the "political directorate" or more simply, the executive branch of the federal government:

> By the power elite we refer to those political, economic, and military circles which as an intricate set of overlapping cliques share decisions having at least national consequences. In so far as national events are decided, the power elite are those who decide them.
>
> (Mills 1956, p. 18)

These "overlapping cliques" share an "uneasy coincidence of economic military and political power" (Mills 1956 pp. 278, 19) based upon "coincidences of interest" (Mills 1956, p. 19). National in scope and historic in importance: "slump, war and boom" (Mills 1956, p. 8)—these are the decisions that are the province of the power elite for Mills.

The Power Elite was importantly a work born out of Cold War America and the concerns Mills and other intellectuals had in that context. He saw the "military definition of reality" and security issues as dominant among the power elite of his time. The men who commanded these hierarchies (they were all men back then) were, he determined, disproportionately drawn from the social upper classes or were absorbed into their world through the rewards of the corporate economy. They moved between the top spots in these institutions, in what later would be pictured as a series of revolving doors.

Despite the common class backgrounds of the men he found to be leading the Cabinet, the top corporations and (only in part) the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Mills, as Domhoff, veered

away from the Marxist usage "ruling class." One can only speculate about the unarticulated reasons (e.g., aversion to the sloganeering style of Comintern-era Marxist writing), but Mills was succinct in writing: "Ruling class," he wrote, "contains the theory that an economic class rules politically." That, he said, must be established empirically, but not by definition (Mills 1956, p. 277).

Domhoff's First Turn—Away from the Military

Domhoff initially transformed Mills' original scheme in two important ways. First, writing in the Vietnam War era, it was no longer viable to consider the military establishment as an autonomous source of decision-making. What had been, until Afghanistan, America's longest war was a civilian-initiated project whose strategic overseers were firmly seated in the White House (e.g., see Halberstam 1973, Wells 1994). The second transformation had profound impact on Mills' conception of the "middle levels" of power.

Mills' view of the importance of the military establishment in the making of decisions national in scope and historic in importance rested on two facts of life that dominated the fifties and early 1960s in American life. One was the looming threat of nuclear annihilation. Todd Gitlin (1993) captures this mood of the fifties (in his book, *The Sixties*), discussing the fear of nuclear catastrophe in popular culture, and the related attachment of young intellectuals (and others and those not so young) to young martyrs such as James Dean and the not-so-young Albert Camus (Gitlin 1993, pp. 11–30). Mills repeatedly refers to decisions to use or not to use the atomic bomb as examples of the proposition that our history is made by human choice.

In addition, the military establishment of that time was understood to be an essential part of "monopoly capitalism" (Baran and Sweezy 1966). After Dwight Eisenhower first used the phrase in his 1961 farewell address, the "military-industrial complex" was understood by critical scholars and left activists as both powerful and essential to the stability of the modern capitalist economy (Cook 1961). Domhoff did not and does not focus on the "military-industrial complex."

Apart from the jarring reality that the bloody adventure in Vietnam was a creation of civilian strategists, other aspects of the evolving security structure of the world made Domhoff's change in Mills' scheme appropriate. A crazed stand-off between the nuclear powers and the initial steps toward arms control gradually eased the sense of a world at the brink of all-consuming flames. Actual wars were smaller scale, wars of national liberation and in Pentagon-speak "asymmetrical."

Arguably more profound, however, in changing the relevance of the military establishment to the power elite, was the evolving nature of the role of military spending in the U.S. economy. Falling from its height of more than 40% of GDP during World War II to 10% during the late fifties when Mills wrote, defense spending has never gone over 10% and has been below 5% for most of the time since the 1970s (Watkins 2014). Changing technology also has an impact on the relevance of military industry to politics: it takes fewer people and much more capital to make drones and missiles than tanks and rifles. In technical terms the employment multiplier of military spending has fallen (e.g., see Waldman 2014 and Pollin and Garrett-Pelletier 2009).

Domhoff and the Middle Levels of Power

However much he derided the "military definition of reality" and its "crackpot realism," by 1956 Mills shared its hypnotic attention to U.S. security affairs. He had explored the favored agency of change of the historic Left when he wrote, in 1948, *New Men of Power*: *America's*

Labor Leaders. Later he would caustically refer to Marxists' "labor metaphysic"—which he rejected. He investigated the emergence of new social strata in *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* (1951)—and was unimpressed. Although he was a co-author of an investigation of Puerto Rican migration to New York, *The Puerto Rican Journey* (1950), Mills "had no previous background—and perhaps no interest—on this matter" (Vélez 2005, p. 205). He wrote nothing of consequence about the civil rights movement, which had emerged during his last years. Below the pinnacles of power, by the mid-fifties, Mills saw the "middle levels" of power and he was dismissive.

Enter Domhoff and the most innovative and important of his contributions to the analysis of American power and influence. As the military dropped from his depiction of the peak of power wielding, Domhoff proceeded to give weight and substance to what Mills had called the middle levels. Domhoff worked inventively and intensively on a number of thorny issues in legislative history (as his essay in this volume discusses)—in most cases (but one) showing the prevalence of capitalist class and upper-class interests. His innovative contribution has been the analysis of the "policy planning process" and network.

A step back from Domhoff and Mills will show the importance of this work.

In a breathtaking departure from political science orthodoxy, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1962, p. 948) proposed that:

> . . . power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences.

Put briefly, Bachrach and Baratz pointed the analysis of power to "agenda control" in addition to the orthodox "decision-making" approach, and further suggested the importance of issue framing. After all, if, as they properly contended, power over inclusion or exclusion of matters for consideration (the public agenda) is a big part of the determination of outcomes, then power or influence over the way a matter is framed on the agenda is similarly important (Ross and Staines 1972). The political scientist E.E. Schattschneider (1960, p. 34) had earlier noted about lobbying groups "that the flaw in the pluralist heaven is that the heavenly chorus sings with a strong upper class accent."

These considerations suggest that Mills simply missed the way social class and economic influence mold the everyday power politics in congressional districts and the Congress. Part of this "miss" is Mills' confusion of speed and power. The bureaucratic command, which he correctly associated with one major form of institutional power, is "fast": an order is given, subordinates execute. Domhoff's contribution has been to show how the corporate community dominates the organs of expertise that mold options and perceptions even before the "slow" power of legislative process begins. "Slow" power—the building of agendas and framing of issues and the legislative process that ensues, is not "less," but it is different from bureaucratic or executive order action.

Consider as an example the formation of the U.S. transit system—a matter that Domhoff has not taken up, but would be perfectly susceptible to his approach. Starting in the 1920s, Bradford Snell (1974) showed, a consortium at first led by automaker GM, oil producer Standard Oil of California, and tire maker Firestone conspired to replace municipal trolleys ("light rail") and commuter rail lines with diesel buses. Less efficient and convenient than

trolleys, buses were nevertheless profitable for the firms involved. GM had a monopoly on the production of diesel bus engines.

After World War II there emerged an "auto-industrial" bloc composed of the aforementioned actors and big infrastructure builders and their local allies (See Feagin and Parker 1990 [2002], pp. 153–179). These managed to construct the interstate highway system as well as the web of highways and tunnels that now characterize our auto-dependent system. For decades, they sheltered the taxes on gasoline from being used for public transportation and have more or less successfully prevented mass transit and rail from competing with the auto for metropolitan transit. However incremental and slow all these decisions have been, they have in fact created a built environment and way of life. That is another kind of power, one Domhoff understood but Mills did not.

The long, slow aggregation of decisions—slow power—is the larger way a dominant class shows its dominance and maintains it. Again, Domhoff works this field well, in his studies of legislation at the national level and of New Haven locally.

Domhoff, Mills, Marx: Does It Matter?

In Domhoff's view, an upper class based on corporate ownership brings into its orbit of "older money" the upper levels of corporate executives. This capitalist class is joined by their top agents, for example, the big law firm leaders—in a "corporate community." This class-community has among it a more politically active fraction: This is the governing class, and the power elite is its executive arm. Now Domhoff insists that he is not a Marxist (eschewing even Mills' non-sectarian "plain Marxist" label). In large part, he seems to think that since he does not have a "theory of history" he is outside of this theoretical community.

Were Paul Sweezy still alive he might have a similar view of Domhoff as that he directed to Mills. In 1956 Sweezy appreciated Mills' unmasking of American power, but argued Mills lacked a theory of the political economy—and thus his "class" analysis had no dynamic (Sweezy 1956). In this regard Domhoff falls short much as Mills did—he does not have an analysis of what drives either U.S. or world capitalism. As the Communist intellectual Herbert Aptheker (1960) pointed out, in particular, you don't have to have a Marxist theory to see the advance of what he called "finance capital" and is now referred to as "financialization," but you do have to have an economic analysis.

If the rise of finance is one theme in the development of institutional power-wielding of the last generation, the other companion to it is the development of global capitalism. As Kent Trachte and I argued (1990), what is now called "globalization" was and is driven by capital solving its problems with organized workers through a "geographic" fix.

To avoid the bargaining power of unions and workers in manufacturing, the big firms have exported large swaths of production to areas of the world where workers are more vulnerable and have less political influence than they had in the older "core" industrial regions. This has gutted the middle-income working class, leaving it with stagnant or lower purchasing power and more insecurity. The disproportionate loss of jobs in unionized sectors has also led to the rapidly declining political influence of workers and their unions. These changes are a large part of the "missing middle" sometimes referred to as an "hourglass"–shaped job and income structure.

The increase in the importance of financial sector actors and the emergence of globalized production networks are the most profound forces shaping our everyday lives. Our era is thus one that witnesses major changes in the structure of capitalism and of our society: but these are not major themes or framing realities in Domhoff's view of power. But his methods can help us understand who the actors are and how to find them, and understanding the

components of what I have called "slow power" gives us the tools and vision to clarify the workings of global capitalism. So, it does not actually matter (to me) whether Mills or Domhoff are considered "Marxist." What does matter is that they can help us understand the current structure of power, even as they must be supplemented by an understanding of what drives changes in that structure.

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Section III

The State

Practice

In the previous section we examined how mainstream pluralists and functionalists look at the state and offered critiques of those positions. Here we offer five selections that examine how the state actually works on the ground, in fact. What we find is that the dominant group, whether we wish to call it the capitalist class or the bourgeoisie, or the ruling elite will employ its dominance of the state apparatus to benefit itself. Each of the five readings in this section will demonstrate this key point in a different realm of activity. These are equality/inequality, urban development in the aftermath of disaster, the right to vote, the creation of consensus in a contested terrain, and policing.

For many years James W. Russell served on the sociology faculty at Eastern Connecticut State University and later taught at the University of Washington Vancouver and in the Political Science Department at Portland State University. Among Russell's publications are *Double Standard: Social Policy in Europe and the U.S., After the Fifth Sun: Class and Race Formation in North America,* and *Social Insecurity: 401(k)s and the Retirement Crisis*. In "The Politics of Income and Wealth Inequality" Russell relies on the work of Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman as well as the Congressional Budget Office to document significant growth of inequality in the distribution of both wealth and income starting in the early 1970s. Russell then initiates a wide-ranging discussion in which he compares Republican reliance on market forces and Democratic commitments to mild increases in social welfare benefits. Russell concludes (a) that the differences between the two parties are small and (b) that lower income Americans would be better off with European style subsidies for rent and health care as opposed to increases in the minimum wage which are likely to be quickly eaten up by inflation. While the analysis is correct, we would point out that the U.S. is far more to the right on the political spectrum than the average for European nations, and it is probably not possible to create European style social welfare systems in the U.S. because it would push the Democrats beyond the limits of what the party leadership would tolerate. Therefore, in the absence of a broad and sustained social movement, raising the minimum wage is the only realistic option in the U.S. despite its limitations correctly pointed out by Russell.

John Arena teaches sociology at CUNY Staten Island. He notes that in the aftermath of the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina (2005) in New Orleans the city's business, political, and social leaders understood that a tremendous opportunity had opened up to them that would not have been available otherwise. The opportunity was to rebuild the city according to their elite vision, and that vision was to make New Orleans smaller and less Black. Those largely Black populations who had fled the city for their lives were not welcomed back, and the city was opened up to developers who proceeded to empty out and tear down public housing. They also sought to condemn and tear down City Hospital which had been built during the New Deal and served the medical needs of the city's residents. Hasty

efforts to have the hospital condemned and torn down were foiled and the hospital was reconstructed though its ownership passed from local government to an outside state agency. Regarding schools, they were privatized and a two-tier educational system was set up with the lion's share of resources going to educate white children of people associated with Tulane University and similar institutions and leftover funds reserved for children, largely minority children, of the working class and the poor.

Lorraine C. Minnite teaches at the Camden campus of Rutgers University and Frances Fox Piven is a longtime social activist and scholar with the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. In "Voter Suppression: The Attack on Rights" they define voter suppression as a strategy to win elections. Parties can win elections by delivering more voters to the polls, and they can also win elections by preventing those who have the right to vote from casting their ballots. The latter practice and the many techniques used to carry it out are called voter suppression. The techniques have ranged from publishing incorrect information on the location of polling places and their hours of operation to political murder (lynching). The practice is as old as the republic, and it has been used by all political parties in all regions of the country. In recent years though voter suppression has been the favored technique of the Republican Party. The authors write, "The on-going efforts to suppress voting have always been based on the assumptions of inferiority and unworthiness grounded in racism, fear, a distaste for the lower classes, and competition for resources." Many techniques of voter suppression are documented with concrete examples across time periods and geographical areas.

In the first of two contributions to this volume, pre-eminent geographer David Harvey asks how neo-liberalism was brought about. In Chile it was accomplished through extreme violence and repression. In places like the U.S. and the U.K. there is a strong preference for more democratic means. The first wedge was unwittingly introduced in the desire for social justice and individual freedom that took root after the social protests of the late 1960's Then we have the soon to be nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court Lewis Powell and his influential memorandum to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce wherein Powell argued that attacks on the U.S. free enterprise system had gone too far and the time for the business community to mobilize its resources in the defense of the system was overdue. Harvey then uses the crises of 1970s New York as an extended case history. The unity of the financial sector versus the divisions among New York's racial and ethnic groups and trade unions were the deciding factor in the victory of finance capital. New York then became the template for the neoliberal agenda in the rest of the country.

Closing out this section South African scholar Christopher McMichael critiques the "militarization of the police" discourse which has gained substantial traction in both academia and the media. Particularly influential in the United States, proponents of this concept claim that the "traditional" boundaries between war and policing are blurring. However, this argument is both historically and politically problematic. The fact that right-wing libertarians have been at the forefront of calling attention to the militarization of the police highlights that while it is a thesis that critiques state power, it is not a thesis that critiques capital. As a result, supporters of the militarization of the police thesis constantly fall back into a liberal frame of trying to delineate boundaries between the military and the police rather than looking at how war and policing have overlapped and conjoined historically and currently in everyday life.

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Chapter 14

The Politics of Wealth and Income Inequality

James W. Russell

Wealth and income inequality have increased significantly in the United States. Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman in the most comprehensive study of wealth distribution to date conclude that the top 1 percent increased its share of national wealth from 24.3 percent in 1980 to 41.8 percent in 2012. Driving most of the rise was the share taken of the top 0.1 percent, which rose from 8 to 22 percent.[1] Wealth concentration is now approaching the level just before the Great Depression. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the share of national disposable household income that the top 1 percent took jumped between 1979 and 2014 from 9 to 16.7 percent.[2] The United States now has the highest disposable income inequality of the thirty-one developed countries for which the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has information.

There are different perspectives regarding whether the U.S. inequality rate has reached the point of dysfunctionality. By dysfunctionality is meant, in this context, whether the rate is so high that it is causing significant economic, social, and political problems for the society as a whole.

Conservatives, liberals, and socialists differ in terms of how much income inequality they believe is tolerable. No one believes that absolute inequality where, say, the top 1 percent received all income and the bottom 99 percent none, is acceptable and there are no current examples of complete equality in which all percentiles receive the same percentages of national personal income. It is between those extremes of absolute inequality and absolute equality that there are ideological differences regarding acceptable rates.

Conservatives believe that the social system can tolerate the most amount of inequality and socialists the least with liberals somewhere in the middle. Underlying those differences is a common agreement that the natural tendency of unregulated capitalism is to increase income inequality as the advantages of competitive winners become cumulative.

In judging these ideological differences, we can distinguish economic, social, and political dysfunctions. If there is too much income inequality, the lower income classes do not have enough to spend to keep the economic circulation of commodities sufficiently strong to maintain rates of profit. John Maynard Keynes is most associated with that position. He advocated in his 1936 magnum opus, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money,* that state policy be oriented toward a limited redistribution of income in order to maintain a functional circulation of commodities. That was the orthodox economic position from the 1930s to the 1970s, uniting Democrats and Republicans.

In the 1970s the Keynesian position began to be challenged by a reinvigorated originally nineteenth century laissez faire position that implied that wealth and income inequality should be allowed to adjust to the outcomes of market competition without state interference. University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman was most associated with this position.[3] It was not an absolute position since Friedman believed in limited state action to

aid the poor. It is, though, logically possible to have state aid to the poor with growing income inequality at the same time.

By social dysfunctions is meant that even if the system functions well enough economically with high levels of wealth and income inequality, it still produces patterns of social interaction that are undesirable. A society with high income inequality, for example, runs the danger of being associated with aggravated social alienation between income classes. The European social policy concept of social inclusion originated from the concerns of classic French sociologist Emile Durkheim that there is a functional need of social integration to produce interclass solidarity that in turn prevents social crises and breakdowns.[4] The problem with too much wealth and income inequality, from this point of view, is that lower income classes become marginalized from rather than integrated into the society. Their relative lack of income prevents them from participating in normal ways in the society. Too much wealth and income inequality thus undermines social cohesion. The society may function economically but in an undesirable social manner.

By political dysfunctions is meant that too much wealth and income inequality undermines legitimacy. Following classic German sociologist Max Weber, legitimacy means the extent to which citizens accept the given political system as proper. Too much wealth and income inequality can breed political alienation, cynicism, and the sense that the system is rigged rather than legitimate. That alienation can then be manifested in low rates of voting and the rise of movements and leaders of the right and left who call for changing the political system.

In sum, too much wealth and income inequality can lead to economic, social, and political crises that undermine the ability of the overall social system to function well. But what is *too much*? On this question conservatives, liberals, and socialists differ. It is like a rubber band which can be stretched more and more until it snaps, with different ideological beliefs over how much it can be stretched before snapping.

Wealth and Income Inequality in the United States

Wealth and income are often conflated, but there are clear distinctions between them and their distributions. Wealth in the most generic sense refers to owned properties and other assets. Ownership of capital wealth—a subset of overall wealth made up of assets (businesses, stocks, bonds, real estate, valuable art works) that have the potential to produce income and rise in value—is the source of the power of the capitalist class in market societies. Income refers to the money one receives to support her or himself and dependents. Sources of income include wages and salaries, government programs, and returns on capital investments (rents, dividends, interest, capital gains).

In a capitalist society the sources of income (wages and salaries vs. capital wealth) divide the laboring from the capitalist classes. Examinations of income tax data indicate that at some point just above $500,000 income the largest source shifts from wages and salaries to capital investments. The released Internal Revenue Service data are not refined enough to tell us as exactly at what point that is. Income tax returns showing over $500,000 adjusted gross income make up just 0.9 percent of all returns, very close to the notion of the top 1 percent.[5]

Measurements of wealth and income inequality start with estimates of total national amounts of each. These are then subdivided into percentiles of ownership, such as the percent of total national wealth or income owned or received by each 20 percent from the poorest to the richest. Gini coefficients are the standard statistical measure for capturing the degree of inequality shown by percentile distributions of wealth or income. They range

between 0 (total equality) and 1 (total inequality). Hypothetically, total income equality with a Gini coefficient of 0 would exist if each 20 percent (or 10 percent or other fraction depending on how detailed a table is) of the population from the poorest to richest received that exact percent share of total national income. Total income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 1 would exist in this case if the bottom 80 percent received no income and the top 20 percent received all national income. In actuality, all distributions exist somewhere in between the poles of total equality and inequality with Gini coefficients indicating their placements between the poles.

Table 14.1, based on the Federal Reserve System's Survey of Consumer Finance (SCF), shows the distribution of family wealth and income in the United States. It indicates that (1) both wealth and income are highly unequally distributed and (2) that wealth is more unequally distributed than income since the richest 10 percent have 65.4 percent of the former and a lesser 47.5 percent of the latter. The overall distributions show a Gini coefficient of 0.627 for wealth and, as expected, a lesser 0.508 for income.

Statistical information on wealth and income inequality varies according to how it is collected, including the year of collection and the unit of analysis (household, the most common, or family, individual, or some other unit). The advantage of the SCF data is that it provides a snapshot of a moment in time of the distributions of both family wealth and income. Since it employs a common methodology, its wealth and income results are comparable.

Current rates of wealth and income concentration are at historic highs. Beginning in 1913 (see Table 14.2) the top 1 percent's share of national wealth decreased from 45.1 percent to 23.6 percent in 1980 and then began climbing to 39 percent in 2010. As mentioned earlier, concentration of wealth ownership is now approaching the level just before the onset of the Great Depression, when it was at 43.4 percent. During that same period, the percent of national income received by the top 1 percent has ranged between 8.7 percent in 1970 and 17.8 percent in 1913. The 17.1 percent rate for the latest available year of 2014 is at the high end of that range.

Table 14.1 Distributions of Family Wealth and Income in the United States (percentages of total national wealth and income)

Percentile	*Wealth*	*Income*
0–19.9	2.2	3.3
20–39.9	3.5	6.7
40–59.9	6.6	10.7
60–79.9	10.7	18.3
80–89.9	11.6	13.6
90–100	65.4	47.5
Top 1	38.6	23.8
Total	100.0	100.1
Gini coefficient	0.627	0.508

Source: Calculated from "Changes in U.S. Family Finances from 2013 to 2016," Survey of Consumer Finance, *Federal Reserve Bulletin,* September 2017, Tables 14.1, 14.2 and Box 3.

Note: Gini coefficients calculated by author. Income is before taxation.

Table 14.2 Top 1 Percent Share of Family Wealth and Income in the United States

Year	*Wealth*	*Income*
1913	45.1%	17.8%
1920	35.7%	16.8%
1930	43.4%	15.7%
1940	37.7%	17.1%
1950	28.5%	12.9%
1960	27.8%	10.2%
1970	28.1%	8.7%
1980	23.6%	9.2%
1990	27.4%	12.5%
2000	34.4%	14.4%
2010	39.0%	17.3%
2014	38.6%	17.1%

Source: World Inequality Database, http://wid.world/data/, (accessed May 19, 2018).

Note: Income is post-tax.

Redistributing Wealth and Income

Through government taxation and social programs, the U.S. government redistributes downward a certain amount of wealth and income. Its high wealth and income inequality would be even higher if the government did nothing. Redistribution in itself is non-controversial. What is controversial is the degree of redistribution that is deemed necessary and fair with conservatives, liberals, and socialists holding different views. As distributions of wealth and income vary between the poles of complete equality and inequality, redistributions of wealth and income vary in a parallel fashion between zero and total redistribution, with actual redistributions varying between mild and radical.

Radical redistributions of wealth downward have not occurred in the United States.[6] Current wealth redistribution downward in the United States takes the form of taxation of inherited wealth and capital income, including interest, dividends, business profits, rents, and capital gains. In the case of the estate tax on inheritance between 1965 and 2016, according to OECD data, federal tax revenue declined by 80 percent.[7] As a result of the American Taxpayer Relief Bill of 2013, the first $5.49 million of inheritance for individuals and $10.98 million for married couples was exempted from taxation. Only 0.2 percent of estates were taxable.[8] The 2017 Republican-sponsored Tax Cut and Jobs Act more than doubled the thresholds to $11.2 million and $22.4 million. That lowered the percentage of taxable estates to under 0.1 percent. Put differently, if 1976 estate tax rules were still in effect in 2016, the federal government would have collected $35 billion more in revenue, which would have made up a little more than one percent of all tax revenue. While the one percent in tax revenue foregone is not very significant in terms of total federal government financing, it is very significant in terms of inter-generationally preserving overall wealth inequality and the wealth of the very rich. It could also very important for specific federal programs. An extra 35 billion could have almost doubled the amount spent on all homelessness programs in 2018.[9]

Studies of redistribution of income distinguish market from disposable income. Market income, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

(OECD) is "gross earnings, self-employment income, [and] capital income." Disposable income is market income "plus the current transfers received, less the taxes and social security contributions paid." Disposable income "is the income that people have available to buy goods and services," after the government has given out money (social security, veterans benefits, etc.) and taken money away (income, property and sales taxes, etc.).[10] The importance of the distinction is that the difference between the two is a measure of the effectiveness of government policy to reduce income inequality, which occurs to different extents in all developed societies.

Government taxation and social programs exist as intervening variables between market and disposable income. The more progressive tax collection is, the more income will be redistributed downward. The more that social programs exist that disproportionately benefit middle and lower income groups, the more that income will be redistributed downward.

The question of how much is redistributed downward is eminently a political question in terms of what the governing ideology is. The goal, for example, of neoliberal policy is to make the distributions of market and disposable income as close as possible. Liberal and social democratic policies, on the other hand, are premised on tempering the inevitable accentuation of inequality by the market with taxation and social programs to lessen it.

The extent to which government policy lessens the inequality that would be produced by the distribution of market income can be measured by the following formula:[11]

$$\frac{\textit{market income Gini coefficient} - \textit{disposable income Gini coefficient}}{\textit{market income Gini coefficent}} = \textit{percent income inequality reduction}$$

Using this methodology, we will look at the growth of income inequality in the United States in recent historical and comparative perspectives, paying attention to taxation policies and social programs.

1979 is the earliest year for which there are reliable statistics on both market and disposable income inequality (see Table 14.3). The figures show that market income inequality grew, with some exceptions, steadily over the thirty-five years between 1979 and 2014, from a beginning Gini coefficient of 0.47 to one of 0.60. That represents a 27.7 percent increase in overall market income inequality for those years.

Between 1979 and 2014 disposable income inequality was less than market income inequality by an average 23.5 percent. That meant that an average 23.5 percent of market income was redistributed downward to lessen the extent that market income inequality resulted in different income groups having unequal amounts of spending money.

Government taxation and social program policies thus functioned, as expected, to temper the extent of substantive income inequality that otherwise would have been produced by the market. But has that redistributive capacity of government policy weakened during this period? The evidence from Table 14.3 is that it has not. The extent of income inequality reduction has varied between a low of 18.9 percent in 1986 daring the Reagan administration and a high of 27.6 percent in 2009 and 2010 during the first Obama administration. Rather than an historical trend of decreasing income inequality reduction, the extent of inequality reduction has varied according to political conditions, that is, whether Democrats or Republicans occupied the White House and had control of the houses of Congress.

Table 14.3 Income Inequality (Households) in the United States (Gini Coefficients)

	Market	*Disposable*	*Percent Redistribution*
1979	0.47	0.35	25.5%
1980	0.48	0.36	25.0%
1981	0.48	0.36	25.0%
1982	0.49	0.37	24.5%
1983	0.50	0.39	22.0%
1984	0.51	0.40	21.6%
1985	0.51	0.40	21.6%
1986	0.53	0.43	18.9%
1987	0.52	0.40	23.1%
1988	0.53	0.42	20.8%
1989	0.52	0.41	21.2%
1990	0.52	0.40	23.1%
1991	0.52	0.39	25.0%
1992	0.53	0.40	24.5%
1993	0.53	0.39	26.4%
1994	0.53	0.39	26.4%
1995	0.53	0.39	26.4%
1996	0.54	0.41	24.1%
1997	0.55	0.42	23.6%
1998	0.55	0.42	23.6%
1999	0.55	0.43	21.8%
2000	0.56	0.44	21.4%
2001	0.55	0.42	23.6%
2002	0.55	0.41	25.5%
2003	0.56	0.42	25.0%
2004	0.57	0.43	24.6%
2005	0.58	0.45	22.4%
2006	0.58	0.45	22.4%
2007	0.58	0.46	20.7%
2008	0.58	0.43	25.9%
2009	0.58	0.42	27.6%
2010	0.58	0.42	27.6%
2011	0.59	0.43	27.1%
2012	0.61	0.45	26.2%
2013	0.59	0.43	27.1%
2014	0.60	0.44	26.7%

Source: Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income, 2014*. Supplemental Data, Figure 16. Washington, DC: Congressional Budget Office, March 2018.

Between taxation and social programs—the two intervening variables that account for income inequality reduction—the latter has been more consequential in recent years. According to the CBO, "the equalizing effects of government transfers were significantly larger than the equalizing effects of federal taxes from 1979 to 2013."[12]

The United States in Comparative Perspective

The United States is a clear outlier in terms of its very high wealth inequality. Of the twenty-five developed countries for which the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has data on the top one percent of household's share of total personal wealth, the United States at 42.5 percent has by far the greatest. The next most unequal country is the Netherlands at 27.8 percent. The average developed country has the top one percent owning 18.2 percent of total personal wealth. Greece has the lowest top one percent wealth share at 9.2 percent.[13]

It is well known that the high degree of disposable income inequality in the United States also makes it an outlier among developed countries.[14] What is less well known is that despite that exceptionally high relative income inequality, its market income inequality is well within the range of that of developed countries. It is only when we consider disposable income that the U.S. shows up as a dramatic outlier.

The OECD provides Gini coefficients[15] for market and disposable income distributions for forty-one countries, thirty-one of which are developed.[16] In Table 14.4 the countries are listed in order from the lowest to the highest disposable income inequality, making a nominal separation between low (Gini coefficient less than .300), medium (.300 to .399), and high (.400 and greater) disposable income inequality countries.

The United States, at the high end of medium income inequality countries, has the highest disposable income inequality of the developed countries. This is despite its market income inequality being just slightly higher than average for those countries. Nine developed countries have higher market income inequalities but lower disposable ones than the United

Table 14.4 Comparative Income Inequality and Taxation

	Market	*Disposable*	*Percent Reduction*	*Taxation (% GDP)*
Low Disposable Income Inequality (Gini coefficient < .300)				
Iceland	.393	.246	37.4%	36.37%
Slovak Republic	.397	.247	37.8%	32.73%
Slovenia	.461	.251	45.6%	36.98%
Denmark	.444	.256	42.3%	45.94%
Norway	.416	.257	38.2%	37.98%
Czech Republic	.461	.257	44.3%	34.03%
Finland	.507	.260	48.7%	44.13%
Belgium	.495	.266	46.3%	44.18%
Sweden	.429	.274	36.1%	44.12%
Austria	.493	.274	44.4%	42.67%
Luxembourg	.479	.284	40.7%	37.07%
Germany	.500	.289	42.2%	37.55%
Korea	.341	.295	13.5%	26.31%
France	.512	.297	42.0%	45.27%
Switzerland	.382	.297	22.3%	27.83%
Ireland	.549	.298	45.7%	23.03%
Poland	.466	.298	36.1%	33.56%

(*Continued*)

Table 14.4 (Continued)

	Market	*Disposable*	*Percent Reduction*	*Taxation (% GDP)*
Medium Disposable Income Inequality (.300–.399)				
Netherlands	.457	.303	33.6%	38.85%
Canada	.429	.313	27.0%	31.68%
Italy	.512	.326	36.3%	42.87%
Japan	.488	.330	32.4%	30.74%
Australia	.483	.337	29.9%	28.22%
Portugal	.545	.338	37.7%	34.38%
Greece	.560	.339	39.5%	38.56%
Spain	.525	.344	34.5%	33.48%
Estonia	.490	.346	29.4%	34.74%
New Zealand	.462	.349	24.5%	32.08%
Latvia	.487	.350	28.1%	30.25%
United Kingdom	.520	.360	30.8%	33.21%
Israel	.450	.360	20.0%	31.25%
Russia	.485	.376	22.5%	. .
Lithuania	.533	.381	28.5%	. .
United States	.506	.390	22.9%	26.02%
Turkey	.423	.398	5.9%	25.46%
High Disposable Income Inequality (.400 +)				
Chile	.486	.454	6.6%	20.39%
Mexico	.478	.459	4.0%	17.22%
Brazil	.575	.470	18.3%	. .
Costa Rica	. .	.493	. .	. .
India	.508	.495	2.6%	. .
China	.608	.556	8.6%	. .
South Africa	.715	.620	13.3%	. .
Developed Countries	.487	.317	34.9%	35.55%

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Income Distribution and Poverty, http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=66670# (accessed November 20, 2017); OECD, Tax Revenue, https://data.oecd.org/tax/tax-revenue.htm (accessed, December 4, 2017).

Note: Latest available data, 2011–2016. Developed countries include all but Poland, Russia, Turkey, and the high disposable income inequality countries. GDP is gross domestic product.

States. The United States is well within the range of market income inequality produced for developed capitalist countries but an outlier with respect to its disposable income inequality, unexceptional in the first but distinctly exceptional in the second.

What accounts for this disparity is that the United States, at 22.9 percent income inequality reduction, has close to the weakest income inequality reduction policies of the developed countries for which the average is 34.9 percent. Of the thirty-one developed countries, only Israel, South Korea, and Switzerland reduce less proportional income equality reduction, all three nevertheless ending up with less disposable income inequality. They are able to redistribute less proportionally and achieve less disposable income inequality because their

market income inequalities, especially those of South Korea and Switzerland, are unusually low. They do not, in short, have to reduce much income inequality to reach the disposable income norms for developed countries. All three, despite having relatively weak welfare states, have the levels of disposable income inequality more often associated with countries with stronger welfare state policies. They are exceptions to the rule that strong welfare state policies are necessary to temper the income inequality that is produced within market societies.

It follows that the high disposable income inequality in the United States is not an inevitable result of capitalist market conditions if other developed capitalist societies have similar or higher levels of market income inequality yet nevertheless lower levels of disposable income inequality. The causal variable in the great majority of cases is state policy rather than any market invisible hand.

Just as Democratic Party administrations are more likely to implement taxation and social program policies that result in lower levels of disposable income inequality in the United States, countries that embrace rather than shun developing welfare states are more likely to have lower levels of disposable income inequality. Of the two—policy differences between Democrats and Republicans and overall differences between the United States and other developed countries regarding the pursuit of strong welfare state policies—it is the latter that explains more of the causes of high relative disposable income inequality in the United States. If it were possible for residents of the United States who wanted more equality to choose between having Democrats continuously in the White House backed up by controlling the Congress and adopting the average redistribution policies of other developed countries, they would achieve much more from the latter. Democratic presidencies produce on average 21.3 percent more income inequality reduction than Republican ones while average developed country reduce income inequality 52.4 percent more than the United States. Reaching the goal of a more normal developed country disposable income distribution in the United States will take deeper transformations than electing Democratic Party politicians who will pursue policies within the same range of past Democratic Party administrations.

Summary and Discussion

As the data on comparative wealth and income distributions indicate, there is a fairly broad range of inequality within which developed capitalist societies can economically function. The United States is at the upper end of that range with high levels of inequality while other developed countries are lower within it. There are though important social and political differences that accompany relatively high versus relatively low inequalities of wealth and income. Government policy is the key variable that tempers the economic tendency within market societies for distributions of wealth and income to become disproportionately concentrated in the upper economic strata. If the United States has the highest wealth and income inequality of the developed countries it is because its government does the least to reduce that inequality.

The relationship between government policy and inequality reduction is especially clear for the distribution of disposable income. As Table 14.4 indicates, there is no inevitable relationship between market income and disposable income inequalities. The United States has both higher than average market and disposable income inequality. France has higher than average market inequality but lower than average disposable income inequality, Mexico has lower than average market inequality but higher than average disposable income inequality. Canada's averages are low for both market and disposable income inequality. The status of the United States as an outlier in terms of having the highest level of disposable income

inequality for a developed country thus results from policy choices. As discussed earlier, those policy choices have varied in part according to which political party occupied the White House. Elections thus very much matter. But they do not matter as much as the general policy range that Republicans and Democrats have operated within for income inequality reduction, a range which produces significantly less reduction than the policy ranges found in other developed countries.

The low level of taxation in the United States constrains the development or expansion of social programs that would have inequality reduction effects. With the exception of Ireland, it collects the lowest proportion of taxes as a percent of gross domestic product of any developed country (see Table 14.4). Its 26.02 percent is significantly less than the 35.55 percent developed country average. It is not so much the progressivity of the taxes as the absolute amount that is the issue. The United States has a more progressive tax system than a number of countries that nevertheless have lower disposable income inequality. If the rate of taxation, however progressive, is low as it is in the United States, then there is less tax revenue to support redistributive social programs. Theoretically, it would only take a dedicated five percent antipoverty tax on the income of the upper 20 percent to yield more than enough revenue to entirely eliminate poverty while still leaving the highest quintile with more than double the average income of the next lower one. While that type of radical redistribution to eliminate poverty has not occurred anywhere, less ambitious antipoverty redistributional programs have been employed widely with varying degrees of poverty reduction.

Ideally, from the point of view of inequality reduction, there should be sufficient tax revenue to support redistributive social programs and it should be collected progressively. But the progressivity of the tax collection need not be a litmus test. Lower income groups can disproportionately benefit from redistributive social programs even if they are supported by flat rather than progressive taxation.

The state of Oregon is a good example of the distinction. It does not have a state sales tax and voters have consistently blocked attempts to adopt one. One of the major arguments against adopting a sales tax is that because it would be a flat tax—all consumers would be taxed the same percentages of purchase prices—it would have a regressive effect on lower income groups that must spend greater proportions of their incomes on basic necessities. What is neglected is that while collected regressively, the regressivity could be overcome by the redistributive effects of the social programs, such as in public education, poverty relief, and health insurance, that could now be adequately financed. Whether the increased tax revenue would be expended in that manner is another question, but without the increased tax revenue there is no possibility to increase benefits for lower income groups. Increased tax revenues create the possibility, if not the inevitability, of greater downward income redistribution.

Understanding the role of income inequality reduction through taxation and social program support puts into perspective strategies for combatting inequality. Successful campaigns to increase minimum wages for the working poor will certainly provide welcome new income, but they will not necessarily reduce income inequality if there are simultaneous tax cuts and cut backs in social programs. In the long run, a higher minimum wage may be associated with higher costs for rent, food, health care, etc. A more effective strategy for aiding lower income groups would be to concentrate on lowering rates of disposable income inequality. Subsidized health care and housing, for example, would be more valuable to low-income families than small increases in minimum wages. For lower-income groups, increases in disposable income, which include the value of social program transfers, are more important than increases in market incomes alone.

Notes

1. Emmanuel Saez and Gabriel Zucman, "Wealth Inequality in the United States since 1913: Evidence from Capitalized Income Tax Data," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*. Vol. 131, issue 2 (May 2016): 552 and Table B1. See also Edward Wolff, *A Century of Wealth in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.
2. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income*, (2014), Supplemental Data Table.
3. See Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
4. I have discussed the Durkheimian roots of the concept of social inclusion in chapters 3 and 5 of my *Double Standard: Social Policy in Europe and the United States.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 4th edition, 2018.
5. Internal Revenue Service *Statistics of Income, Individual Income Tax Returns Publication 1304,* Table 1.4 (tax year 2015).
6. Radical redistributions downward of wealth occurred outside the United States in two forms in the twentieth century. In the first, communist and other types of governments nationalized industries so that capital wealth passed from private to public ownership. In the second, land reform programs in developing countries resulted in land ownership being redistributed to landless peasants. Both forms considerably slowed by the current century for a variety of reasons, the largest being the abandonment of radical socialist development models. What has become more likely are radical redistributions of wealth upward in formerly communist countries as they have adopted market reforms. China and Vietnam, while still governed by communist parties, have also adopted widespread market reforms that have resulted in redistributions upward of wealth and income. At the same time, it is important to note that it is theoretically possible for high economic growth rates, as have been occurring in China and Vietnam, to enable increased standards of living for the lowest strata at the same time that inequality is increasing.
7. OECD, "Estate, Inheritance, and Gift Taxes," www.stats.oecd.org (Accessed June 7, 2018).
8. Chye-Ching Huang, and Chloe Cho "Ten Facts You Should Know About the Federal Estate Tax," Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, (October 30, 2017): https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-tax/ten-facts-you-should-know-about-the-federal-estate-tax (Accessed June 8, 2018).
9. The federal government spent $42.2 billion in 2018 on homelessness programs administered by Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, the Veterans Administration, and other agencies. National Alliance to End Homelessness, "Federal Funding for Homelessness Programs." https://endhomelessness.org/ending-homelessness/policy/federal-funding-homelessness-programs/ (Accessed, May 25, 2019).
10. OECD, "Compare Your Income—Methodology and Conceptual Issues," OECD, Paris, (July 2017), https://www.oecd.org/statistics/Compare-your-income-methodology.pdf. Accessed, November 17, 2017. In the U.S. Social Security, Social Security Disability, veterans benefits, public assistance, government aid to college students, unemployment insurance, and workmens' compensation are examples of transfer payments.
11. See Table 14.3, "Percent Redistribution" column and Table 14.4 "Percent Reduction" column.
12. Congressional Budget Office. *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes: 2013,* 22.
13. OECD Wealth Database. https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=WEALTH (Accessed June 16, 2018).
14. For a discussion of relative income inequality in the United States and Western Europe, see Chapter 7, Social Cohesion and Inequality, in my *Double Standard: Social Policy in Europe and the United States.*
15. Meticulous readers will note that the Gini coefficients for the United States differ in Tables 14.1, 14.3, and 14.4. There are multiple possible reasons for these differences, including that the CBO and OECD did not use exactly the same data sets and that the calculations of the coefficients themselves may have been based on different percentile groupings, for example, each decile vs. quintile. What is to be expected is that the coefficients within each of—but not between—the tables are quantitatively comparable because they resulted from common methodologies.
16. The OECD does not identify countries as developed or not. Nor is there a universal consensus official listing anywhere of developed countries. Used here is the International Monetary Fund list of advanced economies. It includes all of the OECD-listed countries in Table 14.3 except Poland, Russia, Turkey, and all of the high disposable income inequality countries. International Monetary Fund, *World Economic Outlook,* April 2017: Table B1.

Chapter 15

A Right to the City?

Race, Class, and Neoliberalism in Post-Katrina New Orleans

John Arena

I think we have a clean sheet to start again. And with that clean sheet we have some very big opportunities.

—Real Estate Developer Joseph Canizaro, September 29, 2005

Joe Canizaro, I don't know you, but I hate you. I'm going to suit up like I'm going to Iraq and fight this.

—Black Homeowner Harvey Bender, January 10, 2006

When rights conflict (as they inevitably do) force decides.

—Don Mitchell (2003:22)

Academics and political activists have increasingly, over the last decade, employed the concept of a "right to the city," drawn from the work of the late French theorist Henri Lefebvre (1968), to frame their critique of, and galvanize opposition to, the inequalities and injustices of contemporary cities. In the academic world, for example, scores of recent journal articles employ the concept in their title, and many more in their substantive analyses, while geographer Don Mitchell (2003) wrote a book by the same name. In 2007 a collection of community organizations across the U.S. formed the *Right to the City* coalition—with advice and support from academics influenced by Lefebvre's work—to more effectively fight against neoliberalism and "for housing, health care, public space . . . and to build an alternative for our cities" (RTC 2009). A collective right to the city provision was even included in the Brazilian Constitution in 2001 and out of the global Social Forum movement a *World Charter for the Right to the City* has emerged (Harvey 2008).

The increasing use of this social scientific concept, and political slogan, coincides, unsurprisingly, with the deepening of the neoliberal political and economic model that has effectively denied a right to the city to large segments of the working class. Neoliberalism, which emerges in the 1970s, is best understood as a response by ruling classes around the world to the increasing challenges to their rule that emerged in the post-World War II era, and that crystallized in the powerful labor, student, and guerrilla-insurgencies of the 1960s. As part of an effort to reassert their power and profits ruling classes, to various degrees, began, in the 1970s, abandoning the class-compromises embedded in the post-World War II Keynesian welfare state. While these reforms were unevenly applied across the world capitalist system, including within the core capitalist countries, they did provide some real material concessions and protections from the capitalist market. In place of the welfare state, or what Harvey (2005) has termed

"embedded liberalism," the "neoliberal model" of privatizing public services, deregulating corporate activity, breaking the power of labor unions, and increasing the power of finance capital has taken hold over the last several decades. Urban communities, Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore argue, have been especially hard hit by this agenda, as cities have become "a key arena in which the everyday violence of neoliberalism has been unleashed" (2002: ix). In the U.S., the concrete manifestations of this violence—both structural and direct—have included the destruction of public housing and other forms of gentrification that displace low-income and minority communities from long established neighborhoods; the provision of government subsidies for high-end shopping centers and tourist attractions, while educational and social services are underfunded; to beefed up police forces and expanded use of confrontational, "zero-tolerance" policing techniques. Thus, urban neoliberalism represents, in effect, an effort by urban elites to reassert *their* right to the city, part of what Neil Smith (1996) calls the "revanchist" agenda of "taking back" the city from poor and working class communities, particularly racial minorities, immigrants and other vulnerable segments of the population. Thus, the right to the city is really about *class struggle and the city*; a struggle about who can and cannot be there, about who can and cannot shape and design the city; a struggle between contradictory, class-specific "human rights"—and, as Mitchell (2003) emphasizes, when rights conflict, force decides.

In this study I examine the competing and conflicting "right to the city" struggles that unfolded in a post-disaster context, that of post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans. Before the storm struck on August 29, 2005, New Orleans was a city of approximately 465,000, with almost 70% of its residents being African-American. The city was run by what Adolph Reed (1999) calls a "black urban regime" form of government, in which a black political elite controlled the mayor and other top political positions, and ruled in alliance with largely white-controlled corporations. While having their differences, the city's political and economic elite were in general agreement over imposing a neoliberal development agenda that disadvantaged the city's black working class majority. At the same time, while supporting the regressive neoliberal agenda, the black political elite relied on the black working class for electoral support and legitimacy. The contradictory relationship at the heart of the black urban regime, and various grassroots, "right to the city" struggles that exposed these contradictions, such as the 1998 unionization campaign of city workers and the successful 2005 effort to block the privatization of New Orleans' Iberville Public Housing development, placed constraints and obstacles to fully imposing the neoliberal agenda. Hurricane Katrina, and the forced evacuation of the majority of the population, created a new "opportunity structure" for the city's white economic elite to reassert, to "reclaim" *their* city, and reassess their three decade long political sub-contracting relationship with the black political class. What follows is an examination of how the white corporate elite perceived and assessed these new political and demographic conditions, and what actions they took to place their imprint on the city. Conversely, I highlight how working class New Orleanians, particularly the city's black working class majority, worked to challenge this agenda and assert their right to the city. Two key expressions of this conflict examined below are the rebuilding of neighborhoods and reestablishing public services. The first case addresses how the *Bring New Orleans Back Commission,* an elite body appointed by the city's African-American Mayor, Ray Nagin, attempted to prevent the rebuilding of mainly black neighborhoods and "shrink the footprint" of the city. The second set of cases documents how political and economic elites were able to combine pre-storm privatization efforts, with post-storm political opportunities, to carry out a domestic version

of "shock therapy" by rapidly dismantling and privatizing public schools, hospitals and housing. I conclude with an overview of the resistance to privatization and the weaknesses that prevented working class people from effectively asserting their right to the city.

Right to Return vs. Right to Exclude "Planning" and the Bring New Orleans Back Commission

The first key initiative taken by the local elite, following the forced evacuation and continuing displacement of most of the city's residents, was to have Mayor Ray Nagin create the "Bring New Orleans Back Commission" (BNOBC) in late September 2005. The origins of the BNOBC began in the post-Katrina conversations among forty or so powerful business leaders centered in the New Orleans Business Council, including investor James Reiss, and the city's wealthiest and most politically influential real estate developer, Joseph Canizaro (Cooper 2005; Cecil 2009: 44–47). In the immediate aftermath of the storm hundreds of thousands of New Orleanians and Gulf Coast residents were frantically looking for housing, tracking down loved ones, figuring out how to register for aid from FEMA, and dealing with psychological trauma. In contrast, many business, political, and civic elites were both celebrating the displacement—the "clean sheet"—wrought by the storm and forced evacuation, and assessing, as Canizaro termed it, the "big opportunities" now at hand. The celebratory mood is best captured by the comments of Baton Rouge Republican Congressmen Richard Baker, who exclaimed after the storm, "We couldn't clean up Public Housing in New Orleans. We couldn't do it, but God could," referring to the forced evacuation and closing of the city's Public Housing developments after Katrina (Cited in Babbington 2005: 4). In a host of other commentary, elites touted the opportunities created by the storm, while, at times, acknowledging its social costs. The thoughts shared by former New Orleans City Planning Director Kristina Ford graphically exemplified the thinly veiled attempts to mask the enthusiasm in which she and others greeted the effects of Katrina. Ford lamented that New Orleans was presented with a "*horrible opportunity* because of the destruction that caused it and the lives that are being blasted apart." Nonetheless, she emphasizes, the disruption wrought by the storm, "offers a chance to think about things that in the past were unthinkable."[1] In a similar vein, Judah Hertz, of the Hertz Investment Group, the largest owner of commercial real estate in the New Orleans Central Business District, acknowledged less than two weeks after the storm that there had been a "terrible tragedy," but that "it's a chance to rise like a Phoenix, and rebuild like never before . . . this is an urban planners' dream" (Thomas 2005).

In effect, political and economic elites were advocating and articulating, in their various public pronouncements, a theory of elite political intervention and urban change, what activist-writer Naomi Klein (2007) has termed, in her book by the same name, "the shock doctrine." That is, from the perspective of the politically active wing of the local—and national—capitalist class, and their organic intellectuals, the "window of opportunity" had to be seized. The natural and politically-produced destruction and forced evacuation of the majority of New Orleans residents, particularly poor and black working class communities, should be used to implement, or at least deepen, a "disaster capitalist," neoliberal agenda. In contrast to the free market ideology of neoliberalism,[2] the shock doctrine calls for employing state power to seize the opportunity of a physically displaced and disoriented working class to dramatically push forward the neoliberal agenda of "dismantle[ing] . . . assistance for labor and the poor and increase[ing] . . . assistance for capital" (Purcell 2008:15). A disaster creates the ideal opportunity to both "roll back" (Peck and Tidwell 2002), as part of the "destructive" (Brenner and Theodore 2002) phase of neoliberalism, any constraints or impediments on

the exercise of a capitalist "right to the city," and to "roll out" the "creative" stage of the process where the ideal "neoliberal city," that embodies the freedom of capital, is constructed. Key BNOBC member James Reiss, in a pronouncement to the *Wall Street Journal* only nine days after Hurricane Katrina hit the city, underscores the need—and the right—of elites to envision, lead, and carry out this thoroughgoing reconstruction.

> Those who want to see this city rebuilt want to see it done in a completely different way: demographically, geographically and politically. I'm not just speaking for myself here. The way we've been living is not going to happen again, or we're out.
>
> (Cooper 2005)

In a pivotal September 10th meeting Reiss, and a group of overwhelmingly wealthy white businessmen associated with the New Orleans Business Council, met with Mayor Ray Nagin in Dallas, where he had moved his family, to explain to the city's titular head what needed to be done. While developer Joseph Canizaro, a personal friend of President Bush who attained the rank of "Ranger" in the 2004 Bush reelection campaign for having raised over $200,000, did not attend the Dallas meeting, he was clearly, as one prominent business leader observed, "the prime mover on this thing" (the creation of the BNOBC). Underscoring the critical power Canizaro wielded in the BNOBC's formation, the Mayor interrupted the September 10th meeting to take a call from the developer who was relaxing at his home in Utah. "It was an incredible thing to witness," one participant in the Dallas meeting commented, "The Mayor stood there on the phone nodding and jotting down notes, as if Joe were passing on bullet points directly for the President."[3] Shortly after this meeting, the Mayor announced, on September 30th, the formation of the Bring New Orleans Back Commission (BNOBC).

The BNOBC, composed of a 17-person commission, was, on the surface, a "diverse," racially representative body, with eight African-Americans, one Hispanic, and seven whites composing the board, while only two, including the co-chair, Barbara Major, were women, and no representative from organized labor was included.[4] Canizaro emphasized the need for racial inclusivity arguing that, "we in the business community must realize that we need to work with the balance of the community, particularly our African-American associates, to help develop a plan for the revival of the city" (Rivlin 2005). Canizaro had learned the value of these partnerships. In the 1990s, in collaboration with community organizer Barbara Major—who, unsurprisingly, was named the BNOBC's co-chair—Canizaro successfully gained the trust of the St. Thomas Public Housing development tenant leaders to agree to a privatization and downsizing plan developed by the a real estate think-tank, the Urban Land Institute, of which he had been a past president. This agreement, which eventually resulted in reducing the number of Public Housing apartments from 1500, to under 200, and fueled gentrification in the surrounding area, was crucial to increasing the value of his adjacent, riverfront property (Arena 2007a). The inter-racial alliance Canizaro forged helped traverse this potentially politically explosive endeavor—displacing a poor black community in a majority African-American city to increase the property value of land owned by a white developer. In 2002, Major and Canizaro built on their success at St. Thomas, by teaming up to help forge the *Committee for a Better New Orleans* (CBNO), a forerunner of the BNOBC, designed to bring black and white business and civic leaders together to develop plans and popular consensus for pro-business reforms in the city.

With the "opportunities" created by Katrina, Canizaro and the BNOBC set out to undertake a dramatic restructuring of the city that would have been impossible under the normal conditions within which the CBNO had operated. The backing the BNOBC received from President Bush, who dined with commission members in early October, and lauded their

efforts, underscored the power they wielded and encouraged the body to undertake "bold" initiatives. Reflecting the ambitious aims of the BNOBC, which was incorporated as a non-profit, the commission's work was broken up into seven different committees (and subcommittees within them), with each-one headed by a BNOBC member: Education (Scott Cowen), Urban Planning (Joseph Canizaro), Infrastructure (James Reiss), Economic Development (Dan Packer), Social Services (Kim Boyle), Cultural (Cesar Burgos), Governmental Efficiency (Gary Solomon). The work of these committees would be brought together in a "Master Plan to advise, assist, and plan . . . the rebuilding of New Orleans," with the blue-print being presented to the Mayor for implementation in three months (BNOBC 2005). Thus, this non-elected group, which was not representative of the *class* make-up of the city, and in the context of most of the former 465,000 residents still displaced, was given considerable power to develop a blue-print for thoroughly restructuring New Orleans. In effect, the redevelopment plan was being privatized, awarded to a business-dominated, "public-private partnership," of non-elected officials, while the elected, deliberative, official bodies of American democracy, such as the city council, that allow for greater democratic input, were marginalized. These undemocratic features of post-Katrina planning are representative, David Harvey argues in his study of neoliberalism, of how neoliberal reform and restructuring are implemented. "Neoliberals," Harvey points out, tend to be "profoundly suspicious of democracy," and generally

> favor governance by experts and elites. A strong preference exists for government by executive order and by judicial decision rather than democratic and parliamentary decision-making. *Neoliberals tend to prefer to insulate key institutions . . . from democratic pressures.*
>
> (2005: 66)

Indeed key leaders of the BNOBC placed upmost importance in protecting their deliberations from unwelcome, democratic, "populist" intrusions. The power bloc within the BNOBC, centered around the five white members of the New Orleans Business Council and, it appears, two black members, utility executive Dan Packer and banker Alden McDonald (see footnote #4), chafed that the "the open format of the meetings"—they were public hearings and broadcast on the local public access station—"discourages an honest debate over tough issues of race and class" (Rivlin 2005a). As Canizaro lamented, "if my fellow commissioners keep throwing out motions on the floor that we pass without any discussion, just to gain applause, it's just not going to work." In a similar vein Tulane University president Scott Cowen complained that "members of the commission are starting to use the meetings to cater to certain constituencies and stakeholder groups that they know are watching" (Rivlin 2005a). To contain the negative impact of "grandstanding," the commission's power bloc met regularly in private lunch meetings to develop a common position and project a united front at the BNOBC's meetings. The BNOBC's neoliberal modus operandi of creating "patterns of negotiations that incorporate business into governance through closed and sometimes secretive negotiations" (Harvey 2005: 77), did face some challenges from elected officials, incensed over being locked out of secret meetings, such as the gathering in Dallas (Travis 2005). Nevertheless, as Mike Davis (2006) commented on the developments in the first few months after Katrina, "elected black officials protest[ed] impotently from the sidelines [while] a largely white elite has wrested control over the debate about how to rebuild the city." Rather than crusading legislators, it would take determined resistance of the displaced themselves to break through the anti-democratic *cordon sanitaire* the BNOBC had constructed around its negotiations.

Downsizing the City

While all the BNOBC committees were dealing with issues central to the reconstruction of the city, the Urban Planning Committee, headed, unsurprisingly, by Canizaro, dealt with the immediate, and most politically volatile, issues of rebuilding flooded neighborhoods. "Whether all of the city's neighborhoods can or should be resettled . . . [was] the most contentious issue in play" in the immediate weeks and months after Katrina (Donze and Russell 2006). The position staked out and advocated by the BNOBC commissioners, especially those within the power bloc, as well as important opinion makers, such as the *Times Picayune* newspaper, was that of "shrinking the footprint of the city," part of what New Orleans educator Lance Hill has called the racially and class-biased "exclusionary campaign." Proponents of downsizing presented various rationales—soil toxicity, continuing vulnerability to flooding, the three-decade long decline in the city's population, fiscal inability to support city services in sparsely re-settled neighborhoods, and/or lack of interest or financial ability for displaced residents to return—to justify eliminating "unviable" neighborhoods and converting them to other uses, such as flood plains to better protect the city. To further bolster the downsizing position, Canizaro and others cited studies by the Rand Corporation, and even those conducted by liberal, Brown University demographer and sociologist John Logan, that only 225,000 residents—about the half the pre-storm level—would be expected to return by August 2008, three years after the storm. Of course, any figure would be dependent on the type of government policies implemented to either facilitate or obstruct the return of the displaced. Nonetheless, the backers of the "smaller footprint" did not bother to contextualize these population assessments, but rather seized upon these "studies" to legitimate their position. A stream of articles in the local, and national press about the opportunities "under privileged" New Orleanians, particularly African-Americans, were finding in the diaspora was used by "green space" advocates as further, sound, evidence of the need to downsize (Carr and Meitrodt 2005).

To receive "expert advice" on employing "best practices" in the reconstruction effort, the BNOBC contracted with the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the influential real estate industry think tank. The ULI was brought in, unsurprisingly, at the urging of Canizaro, who had been past president of the outfit, and contracted with them in 1993 to construct a redevelopment plan for the St. Thomas Public Housing project. These "land-use" experts came forward with a privatization and downsizing plan that—with help of community activist Barbara Major (and later BNOBC co-chair)—black public housing resident leaders supported as well (Arena 2007a). Thus, confident with their track record, in mid-October 2005, less than two weeks after the commissions' creation, the ULI agreed to assemble a fifty member consulting team, drawn from finance, government, real estate and planning, to advise the BNOBC.[5] On November 18, a little over a month after the ULI panel had been assembled, they delivered their preliminary recommendations. The committee's "most daring" proposal, according to *Times Picayune* reporter Martha Carr, called for "green spacing" a wide swath of the city, covering heavily flooded neighborhoods, and disproportionally black, such as New Orleans East and the Lower 9th ward. To carry out this agenda, the ULI called for the creation of a non-profit agency—the Crescent City Rebuilding Corporation—that would be in charge of all funds funneled to the city for rebuilding, with a primary responsibility being the buyout of properties in the green spaced areas. Furthermore, the agency would be awarded powers of eminent dominant to obtain properties of those that refused to voluntarily sell. Thus, far from the free-market principles of neoliberal theory, the ULI advocated the use of state power and funding to, like the BNOBC itself, create an unelected board, insulated from democratic pressure, to implement public policy.

The BNOBC members, and not only those from the Business Council, embraced these proposals as the type of "bold thinking" the city needed. BNOBC co-chair, and close Canizaro ally, Barbara Major lauded the ULI for their "bluntness" and "challenging us to make more difficult and controversial choices," such as blocking the return of people, disproportionally working class and black, to the city, a policy that violated international human rights accords the U.S. had signed (Carr 2005). In an interview with the magazine *Colorlines,* Major argued that policy makers must accept that many former residents would not return. In the context of efforts to green space the almost all-black 9th ward, and demolish public housing, Major lamented that "we fight to hold onto things that's no longer working" (Fernandez 2006). The "preliminary" report was an attempt by the BNOBC to test the political waters for the "smaller footprint" plan. City council members, and other elected officials, which although having a history of supporting pro-corporate neoliberal policies, were nonetheless more sensitive to democratic pressure, objected to preventing certain neighborhoods from rebuilding (Cecil 2009:71). Their opposition would stiffen as the public learned more about the BNOBC and ULI plans. Opponents included even BNOBC member, and city council president, Oliver Thomas, who weighed-in against the green spacing idea, by waving the bloody flag, announcing that "to fix this community, or that community, is not honoring the dead" (Russell and Donze 2006). Former Mayor, and National Urban League president, Marc Morial, also tapped into the growing outrage over the green spacing flooded neighborhoods by holding a mass meeting in New Orleans East in early January 2006, where he denounced the plan to overwhelming applause.

The smaller footprint plan did have its supporters. For example, the Bureau of Governmental Research (BGR), an outfit that emerged in the 1930s to oppose populist Huey Long under the guise of "good government," and whose leadership was drawn from the same demographic as the New Orleans Business Council, weighed-in for downsizing on the basis of fiscal constraints. The BGR position was provided with added academic gloss by Stephen Goldsmith, head of a major disseminator of neoliberal ideas—the Innovations in Government Program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Goldsmith, an advisor to the BNOBC's "governmental efficiency" committee, supported the ULI triage approach of focusing on only a few neighborhoods for rebuilding: "There's just no way for urban investment to work in city like New Orleans, even pre-Katrina, if you sprinkle investment everywhere. . . . It's unfair to the community to pretend you can do everything, because you can't" (Russell and Donze 2006). The BGR and Harvard University positions are exemplary of the ideological tropes often introduced to justify neoliberal reforms; they fit within the "there is no alternative" genus of arguments popularized by the important neoliberal ideologue, former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. These experts presented their arguments for the racially and class discriminatory green spacing plan as, at best, "unfortunate," and yet inevitable and reasonable.

On January 11, 2006 over 500 people packed into a ballroom—while others had to stand in the hallway—at the Sheraton Hotel to hear the Joseph Canizaro-led Urban Planning committee present their proposals, which followed the general outline laid out by the ULI plan a month earlier. The city would place a moratorium on issuing building permits for four months during which time neighborhoods would have to demonstrate that at least half their pre-Katrina population planned to return. If neighborhoods did not reach the 50% threshold local authorities would designate them as "unviable" and slate them for green spacing. While neighborhoods would be given the opportunity to "prove their viability" the committee envisioned many would not. Indeed the commission issued a "green space map" where large green circles were placed on areas that were deemed unwise to rebuild. The six large green circles—representing future parks and other non-residential uses—were placed on the Lower 9th ward and

other predominantly black neighborhoods while the white, upper—middle class, neighborhood of Lakeview, that was badly flooded, and actually had a lower elevation that the lower 9th ward, was not "green circled" and thus deemed viable. Finally, like the ULI plan, the committee proposed that a state created entity—now dubbed the Crescent City Recovery Corp.—"would oversee the expenditure of federal money . . . and the buying and selling and, in some cases, seizure of homes" (Cecil 2009:73; Russell and Donze 2006).

Opposition to the green spacing plans, which had been building, exploded as the BNOBC officially endorsed the idea. At the January 11th hearing a series of speakers rebuked the plan. The most memorable and forceful denunciation was from Harvey Bender, a black resident of New Orleans East and recently laid-off city worker—Mayor Nagin summarily fired 3,000, mostly black, city workers in October 2005. Bender shouted into the microphone, "Joe Canizaro, I don't know you, but I hate you. I'm going to suit up like I'm going to Iraq and fight this" (Rivlin 2006). A series of other speakers gave impassioned speeches against the committee's proposal to give neighborhoods four months to prove viability or face bulldozers. The growing movement against the green spacing plan was expressed three-days later at a special city council hearing—a body that came out against the BNOBC proposal a day after the raucous January 11 hearing. The budding movement was beginning to have an impact on Mayor Nagin, who until then had walked a middle line, neither endorsing nor opposing the plan. At the January 14 city council hearing a series of speakers, black and white, denounced the plan's violation of property rights, and some, as at the BNOBC hearing, raised threats of violence, such as white homeowner Alex Gerhold who warned that "I will sit in my front door with my shotgun," while others invoked the specter of civil unrest if they continued to face roadblocks to returning. Activist Malcolm Suber, with the Peoples' Hurricane Relief Fund, directed his ire at Canizaro, to overwhelming applause. Nagin who attended the meeting of over 500 people, began inching away from the BNOBC, explaining that he was "uncomfortable" with the four month moratorium, and that he would continue to issue building permits—although he did not rule out the idea of stopping construction (Donze 2006).

Popular pressure on the BNOBC and Mayor Nagin continued as a grass roots coalition organized to carry-on the tradition of starting the annual Martin Luther King (MLK) March, on January 16, from the overwhelmingly, black working class Lower 9th ward. The coalition, led by the public housing group C3/Hands Off Iberville, denounced the Mayor for abandoning the traditional route, arguing this was further evidence of his support for the BNOBC efforts to carry out what march organizer Mike Howells denounced as "ethnic and class cleansing"—the provocative concept that was increasingly being invoked to denounce the elite-led "reconstruction" plans.[6]

It was in this context of 1. growing grass roots opposition to the green spacing plan, and general discontent with the obstacles Katrina survivors, including homeowners, were facing, which was expressed at public forums; 2. competing political elites, such as the city council, and former Mayor Morial staking out positions against the BNOBC plan; 3. the grass roots-led MLK march, and others, condemning policies of "ethnic cleansing," that Mayor Nagin made his widely reported "Chocolate City" comment. At the city's official and truncated 2006 MLK march that culminated on the front-steps of City Hall, Nagin, after bashing black people for crime and out-of-wedlock childbirths, and invoking the standard conservative recipe of "self-help" solutions to social problems, exclaimed:

> We ask black people: it's time. It's time for us to come together. It's time for us to rebuild a New Orleans, the one that should be a chocolate New Orleans. And I don't care what people are saying Uptown or wherever they are. This city will be chocolate at the end of the day.
>
> (Nagin 2006)

The call for a "chocolate New Orleans"—not his demeaning of black folks—generated widespread condemnation in the mainstream media as "reverse racism," as an effort to keep whites out of the city.[7] Yet, the significance of the speech was not the alleged expression of anti-white prejudice, but rather the window it provides for grasping the deep contradictions of the Nagin administration—and, more broadly, post-civil rights black urban politics—and how they are managed. The Mayor's rhetorical disregard for what "people are saying uptown" was a veiled reference to wealthy whites, and in particular, the BNOBC. It represented a politically inexpensive way to express his *independence*—even opposition—to his wealthy "governing coalition" partners that his electoral base was deeply suspicious of, but to which he was in fact closely associated. Conversely, his call for a "chocolate New Orleans" was to express *solidarity* with his black working and middle class "electoral coalition."[8] The speech was about appearing to serve his popular base, to help calm the political waters that had become even more unsettled following the BNOBC's endorsement of the green spacing plan, while still meeting the real needs of his governing partners. Nonetheless, while not yet opposing the green spacing idea, it was clear—following the outpouring of opposition to the plans indelibly connected to Joseph Canizaro—that he would have to deliver some real material concessions if he was to retain power and contain unrest. While not yet employing force to adjudicate between competing "rights," many were making clear they were prepared to defend their homes by any means.

At the same time Mayor Nagin was beginning to bend to mass pressure, there was a simultaneous stepped-up effort to generate support for the green spacing and other recommendations of the BNOBC; to portray them as "common sense," to construct what David Harvey (2005: 39) has called a "sense held in common". A key player in this effort was, unsurprisingly, the *Times Picayune* newspaper, a chief propagator of elite opinion.[9] The tenor of the paper's reporting had, since the storm, been sympathetic to the "smaller footprint" proposal, but its support became much more explicit following the announcement of the BNOBC's Urban Planning Committee's recommendations. Three of the papers most prominent columnists—Stephanie Grace, Jarvis Deberry, and James Gill—along with the paper's editorial board, came out in support of the buyout and green spacing plan. Grace's (2006) editorial was published January 12th—the day after the committee released its recommendations—while the other three appeared in the paper's Sunday, January 15th edition. The writers presented the proposals as "reasonable", with the editorial board (2006) arguing that "four months . . . should be long enough for citizens to determine whether they want to return to their neighborhoods and what they want their neighborhoods to include" while Deberry (2006) asserted that "many more people . . . would rather have money and an opportunity to locate to a less vulnerable spot." At the same time he dismissed as "sentimental attachment" the desire of those that wanted to rebuild their homes and communities, despite the flooding. Gill's (2006) venom was reserved, primarily, for the city council, who he lambasted as demagogic and irresponsible for opposing the plan, while portraying as delusional—clearly directed at African-American sentiment—those that argued the BNOBC plan was a "private land-grab scheme in the Lower 9th ward." Coverage over the ensuing weeks and months by the paper continued to portray the plan in a favorable light.

Professor Michael Cowan was another key "organic intellectual" in this textbook Gramscian attempt to construct the BNOBC downsizing plan as part of a hegemonic, widely accepted and internalized, "public opinion." Cowan, chairman of the City's Human Relations Commission, director of a literacy program at Loyola University, and advisor to Loyola's president, adhered to the "silver lining" interpretation of Katrina, seeing it as an opportunity to overcome the city's class and, particularly, racial divisions to forge a plan for the "common good." Emerging out of this analysis of New Orleans' [*black*] problem, Cowan

formed a new post-Katrina organization, Common Good, which was designed to bring together civic, educational, religious, business, and even labor groups to cooperate in developing a new vision for the city. Critically, from Cowan's perspective, the new organization would help construct a more cordial, safe, public space where ideas could be discussed. In particular, Cowen criticized the "rage, suspicion, and polarization" that accompanied discussion of any public issue, in any public forum, from the school board debates on charter schools to his Human Relations Commission's hearings on police brutality (Nolan 2006). He placed the blame on radicals that poisoned the environment and debate, and argued that those whose "views contribute to racial polarization" must be excluded from the discussions promoted by Common Good.[10]

On January 4, 2006, as part of the Common Good initiative, Cowan, along with Una Anderson, a school board member and major proponent of charter schools, and Ben Johnson of the Greater New Orleans Foundation, which funded Common Good, joined with twenty other non-profits in a press conference to express support for the BNOBC's all but announced plan to downsize the city. Cowan, and his Common Good outfit, also played a central role in organizing, along with BNOBC members Rev. Fred Luter and Archbishop Hughes, a group of religious leaders to also express their support for the BNOBC plans. The delegation employed a "there is no alternative argument" to justify support for the BNOBC initiatives, including the controversial green spacing plan, arguing that New Orleanians must "accept that much of the city is permanently gone" and encouraged "serious engagement with the proposed plan of Mayor Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back Commission" (Nolan 2006). Nonetheless, despite the best efforts of Common Good, and other outfits, such as the "good government" BGR, it was clear the tide was turning against the proposal. Popular mobilizations continued to denounce the plan. For example, when Governor Blanco and the newly formed, Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA)—a state appointed agency which gained control of federal money distributed for recovery, especially rebuilding homes—made a tour of the city in early February, they were met by over 60 protestors in the lower 9th ward chanting "we're here to stay!" (Finch 2006). These and other protests forced Nagin to back off the green spacing plan and building moratorium. On January 22nd the Mayor publically rejected the moratorium on issuing building permits, and on March 21, in his official pronouncement on the BNOBC report, he discarded both the moratorium and the requirement that neighborhoods would have to show their viability, with at least 50% of the former residents prepared to return, before receiving city services (Filosa 2006; Eggler 2006).

The Silver Lining: Union Busting, Privatization, and Ethnic Cleansing

While popular protest defeated the BNOBC's "green spacing" plan, other efforts that effectively blocked the return of many people, disproportionally working class and African-American, did go through, effectively negating their right to the city. These measures included the $10 billion, primarily federally funded "Road Home" program, overseen through the State's Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), but which a private contractor, ICF International, administered (Hammer 2009; Road Home 2010). The program provided grants for *homeowners* to rebuild their dwellings, while providing no money for renters, who composed 53% of all pre-Katrina households, and 57% of African-American households (U.S. Census 2005). In addition, the formula used to make awards was based on the home's pre-Katrina assessed value, which did not take into consideration inflation since the last assessment, making it very difficult for the award to be sufficient enough to rebuild. Furthermore, due to historical and contemporary racist real estate and banking practices—

such as red lining, predatory lending and "racial steering"—the value of black homes were undervalued compared to whites, presenting yet another layer of racial inequality embedded in the so-called Road Home program (Wise 2003).

In addition to the obstacles presented by the "Road Home" program, the systematic dismantling of public services—public schools, public health care, and public housing—represented a central method to deny a right to the city for a large section of the working class, particularly African-Americans. These three vital public services were all under attack pre-Katrina by local, state and national officials who pursued what Miller and Gleason (2008) call a similar "methodology" of privatization: "underfund public services, create an uproar and declare a crisis, claim that privatization can do the job better . . . break public control and divert public money to corporations and then raise prices." The displacement of the city's black working class majority removed a major political obstacle to a rapid and dramatic restructuring of public schools, hospitals and housing along privatized, neoliberal lines.

Before the storm the New Orleans' school system, like many urban schools, faced serious problems rooted in the racially and class-biased "uneven development" investment practices of corporations and governments and, in particular, the use of property taxes as the chief financing mechanism of public schools, which disadvantages poor urban and rural districts (Gotham 2003; Kozol 2005). With these deep structural problems, it is not surprising that enrollment in New Orleans schools plummeted, from 86,000 to 63,000 in the ten years prior to Hurricane Katrina, with a revolving door of 9 different interim or permanent superintendants during this same time period (AFT 2006). The system was also highly segregated by race and class, with most of the district's 3% of white students attending a handful of selective enrollment magnet schools, while many regular, open admission public schools were "failing," albeit as measured by questionable standardized tests that the state and federal government were increasingly requiring districts to administer. The "solution" proffered and attempted by administrators, the state legislature, and local, corporate-run think tanks were neoliberal, "market friendly" reforms, such as school vouchers, charter schools, increased use of standardized tests as measures of success, and anti-democratic initiatives that took power away from elected school boards, increased those of state and school superintendants, and reduced public input at school board meetings. For example, in 2005, a year before the storm, the state superintendant imposed private contractors—Alvarez & Marsal, a New York '"turnaround" firm whose track record included "cleaning up" the St. Louis system through cutting staff and closing schools—to take over the district's finances, and in 2004 the state legislature increased the power of the superintendent and drastically reduced that of the elected board (Rucker 2004; Thevenot 2005).

Therefore, when Hurricane Katrina hit, observers like *Wall Street Journal* columnist Brendan Miniter, saw it providing "A Silver Lining"—as he entitled his column a week after Katrina—to radically reform a "failing public school system." Miniter joined others, such as the Heritage Foundation, in demanding that state and federal authorities take advantage of the storm to convert the New Orleans public school system into a privately run charter system, which could then be rolled out as a model for the rest of the country. Federal, state, and most local officials largely agreed with the *Wall Street Journal* /Heritage Foundation analysis, and moved aggressively to institute a deeper neoliberal restructuring by building on the pre-Katrina foundation. On October 7th, 2005, after the U.S. Department of Education pledged $20 million to Louisiana solely for charter schools, Louisiana's Democratic Governor, Kathleen Blanco, issued an executive order eliminating the requirement that parents and faculty approve conversion of an existing public school, overseen by the local school board, to a privately-run charter school, as well as other impediments (AFT 2006). On the same day as the Governor signed the executive order, the New Orleans school board—after

"weeks of high-level talks among officials in the offices of the governor, the state schools superintendent, the state board of education, and the Louisiana legislature," and under the direction of Alvarez & Marsal, the firm that controlled the district's finances—voted to convert all 13 schools in the unflooded west bank of the city into charters, and abrogate the pre-existing union contract covering the entire workforce—teachers, custodians and cafeteria workers (Gewertz 2005). While various conservative and liberals lauded these "reforms," attorney and public school activist Willie Zanders, expressing widespread disapproval among the city's and district's African-American majority that had been largely locked out of the debate, denounced the use of these disaster capitalism techniques, decrying that "While we're still counting bodies in New Orleans, you're giving away the schools" (Ritea 2005).

The rapid transformation of the selective admission, magnet, Lusher elementary school, which was located in a little-flooded section of uptown New Orleans, near Tulane University, underscores how much of post-Katrina restructuring was built on infrastructure laid before the storm. In 2004, the state legislature passed Act 193, which, among other things, greatly increased the power of the superintendent vis-à-vis the elected school board. The then superintendant, Anthony Amato, quickly took advantage of these powers to negotiate an agreement making Tulane University a "partner" with Lusher. This business-school "partnering"—a form of privatization and key feature of neoliberal reform—was a long-time goal of the university that would facilitate construction of a guaranteed admission policy for the children of faculty and administrators. As part of this new, formal partnership, Tulane and Lusher principal Kathy Reidlinger, with the superintendant's support, pushed to get board approval for the school's expansion to the junior and senior high school level. Even before receiving the board's consent, they moved to appropriate an existing, open admission, all-black school as its future site. Yet, these pre-Katrina Tulane-Lusher initiatives were stymied by the heated opposition of community activists that saw the expansion plan as only deepening the system's inegalitarian, neo-apartheid features (Bernofsky 2009a). The displacement of most of the city's 60,000-plus public school students and their families, and the heading of the BNOBC education committee by Tulane President Scott Cowen, placed the Tulane-Lusher team in a strategic position to push through their reform plan that had become bogged down under the political encumbrances of pre-Katrina New Orleans. In classic disaster capitalism form, Tulane-Lusher operatives quickly exploited the opportunities created by a "clean slate." On September 14, while still meeting in the state-capitol, Baton Rouge, the New Orleans school board approved Lusher's plan to reopen as a charter school and partner with Tulane, and on October 28 the board gave the green light to the school's commandeering of the almost all-black, low-income, Fortier High School for its planned high school expansion, which would prioritize admission of children of full time Tulane employees (later expanded to include Loyola, Xavier and Dillard Universities). As with the west bank schools, the charter conversion broke the existing collective bargaining agreement with the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO) labor union, with Tulane announcing that they would use non-union, uncertified, Teach for America Volunteers to work in the new school, rather than draw from the existing pool of existing certified, but displaced, teachers.[11] With the 1,000 African-American Fortier students, and many public school activists, displaced, the Lusher-Tulane consortium was able to avoid the political obstacles that had blocked their expansion only a year before (AFT 2006: 26).

The most far reaching initiative in the remaking of New Orleans was taken by Democratic Governor Blanco in November 2005, when she signed Act 35, a sweeping measure that led to the state takeover of 102 "failing" schools, out of a district total of 128 (Maggia 2005). Again, as with other measures, this move was not unprecedented: the rating system to authorize a State takeover, and entity to administer the schools, had been erected before Katrina.

Yet, after the storm, the Governor and state legislature dramatically expanded the number of schools that fit the "failing" category by employing a new formula, one that was targeted at large districts, that all but had New Orleans name on it.[12] The 102 schools—of which only a fraction were reopened—were to be run by the Recovery School District, an agency that the state board of education created in 2003 to take over "failing" schools, but which greatly expanded under the new legislation (RSD 2010). Like the above discussed charters, the RSD schools would not be "encumbered" by the New Orleans schools collective bargaining agreement with the United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO), with the systems superintendant free to choose what teachers to hire, free of seniority rules (Maggi 2005a). The earlier decision to exclude RSD and Charter school workers from union representation culminated in a December 9th vote by the New Orleans schools board to fire the district's entire workforce of 7,500 teachers, nurses, custodians and cafeteria workers, which would take effect January 31, 2006.[13]

UTNO, and their president, Brenda Mitchell, had, like most teacher unions in the U.S., pursued a traditional business-unionism model of cooperation with management, and the Democratic Party. For example the union supported, in early 2005, before the storm, the privatization of the school board's finances by the Alvarez and Marsal firm—the same company that oversaw the dismantling of the school system and breaking the union contract (Thevenot 2005). Therefore UTNO was totally unprepared for the new post-Katrina political environment as their former "friends of labor" abandoned them. Underscoring the union bureaucracy's disorientation in the radically changed political environment, Mitchell (2010) lamented that "I could not believe what was going on. We had been working shoulder to shoulder with the State Superintendant [of schools, Cecil Picard]. We did not have an adversarial relationship [before the storm]." Yet, Mitchell soon realized that despite the union's willingness to do whatever was necessary to reopen the schools, including waiving provisions of the union contract, the state superintendent, Cecil Picard, the Democratic Governor, Kathleen Blanco, most of the state legislature, and the school board, made it clear that they no longer considered the union President and UTNO part of the team. As Mitchell ruefully acknowledged, "they had a plan in place, and they saw the union as an obstacle to that plan."

While unions were locked out and no-longer considered legitimate partners in the new, 21st century school system being blazed in post-Katrina New Orleans, a host of local and national foundations, non-profits and think tanks emerged to help fund and manage the new system. At the top of the chain are large foundations—Gates, Broad, Fisher Fund, and the Walton Family—who, as they have done nationally, provided financial, ideological, and political support, along with the locally-based Greater New Orleans Foundation, for a dramatic expansion of charter schools. Indeed, with the "remaking" of the school system, New Orleans had the largest percentage of students in charter schools of any district in the country (Simon 2007). At the mid-range level was the local "charter complex," a collection of privately run and funded organizations that oversee the new system, largely replacing the role of the former school board.[14] The final component of the system is a slew of for-profit and non-profit charter school operators. The non-profits include those established for a particular school, such as Lusher's, as well as national operators, including KIPP, Cosmos Foundation, and EdFutures, supported heavily by the Walton Foundation, while several for-profit companies, including Edison Schools, Mosaica, the Leona Group, have entered New Orleans' "emerging education market" (Ritea 2006; Simon 2007).

The top down formula used to restructure New Orleans schools after Katrina is a prime example of how the "stakeholders" of the former system—teachers, parents, and students—were denied their right to the city. That is, not only were they denied the right to access two basic human rights—education and work—but they were largely denied any democratic

input in reorganizing that institution. As legal scholar, and social justice activist Bill Quigley (2007) observed, underscoring the undemocratic nature of the process, "a massive experiment [is] being performed on thousands of primarily African-American children in New Orleans," an experiment in which "no one asked the permission of the children. No one asked permission of their parents." The end product of this "experiment," as of the 2008–2009 school year, has been a two tiered, neo-apartheid "public" school system, one that includes only about two-thirds of the 128 schools, and half the students, that existed pre-Katrina. On one side are charter schools, most of which are selective admission, receive financial support from foundations, and enjoy, generally, newer facilities, more certified teachers, and smaller class sizes than the other half of the "experiment". In contrast, the second tier, RSD, open admission, "public" schools, made up almost entirely of low-income African-American students, do not receive supplemental funding from foundations, have many uncertified teachers, and operate out of sub-standard facilities, with some not even having working kitchens or water fountains. In a city where many students still suffer from psychological trauma associated with displacement, students at the John McDonogh High School protested, in 2007, against the school's "prison atmosphere," denouncing that there were more security guards than teachers.[15]

The post-Katrina closure of New Orleans' public hospital—Rev. Avery C. Alexander Charity Hospital—and the demolition 5,000 public housing apartments, across four developments, followed a pattern similar to the dismantlement of the public school system. New Orleans Charity hospital was part of the State's Charity system, established in the 1930s, and that by 2005 had 9 hospitals statewide. As with the public school system, the Governor and state legislature introduced several pieces of legislation in the decade before Katrina—with backing from the powerful health care industry lobby—that reduced the ability of the public to defend the system. For example, in 1997 the Governor and state legislature restructured the Charity Hospital system, placing it under the jurisdiction of Louisiana State University (LSU), and thereby ending its status as a self-standing agency with all major budgteting and programmatic decisions requiring approval by the state legislature. In 2003, Republican Governor Foster signed Act 906—based on recommendations of a 40-person commission dominated by private health care interests—further reducing democratic control over the Charity system by allowing LSU to discontinue various services, and make other budgetary and programmatic changes, without legislative approval. In addition, under the same measure, the ground breaking 1926 law making health care a right was "amended," allowing the Hospital to deny services to those that made over 200% of the poverty-line but had not paid for past services. These changes were part of making the hospital, "better able to compete in the marketplace," as State Senator Tom Schedler, sponsor of the legislation argued, further undermining and de-legitimating Charity's historic role of guaranteeing health care as a basic right. Between 2003 and 2005 Charity faced continued budget cuts and service reductions which threatened its ability to even pass accreditation (Moller 2003; 2003a; LSU 2003).

On September 4, 2005, five days after floodwaters inundated the basement of Charity Hospital, curtailing most back-up generator power, and the water and sanitation system, patients and most of the staff were evacuated. Over the next two weeks, from September 5–19, hospital staff, LSU and Tulane University residents, members of the Oklahoma National Guard and German engineers successfully drained floodwaters from the hospital's basement and cleaned debris and had mopped all the floors of the 21 story structure. Yet, on September 19, "with the first three floors ready for use, a half-dozen of the doctors said they were abruptly ordered out of Charity" by Donald Smithburg, the CEO of LSU's Health Care Division. With the full support of Governor Blanco, LSU moved to close Charity permanently, flouting the requirement that the state legislature must approve closure of any

hospital in the Charity system, one of the few democratic controls that remained after the 2003 restructuring. At this point LSU and "CEO" Smithburg began arguing that the old building had to be abandoned, with their handpicked consulting firm arguing the hospital was 65% damaged, which was more than the 51% threshold set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to fund a replacement.[16]

In place of outdated "Big Charity," with its quaint mission of serving the poor and uninsured, what was needed, according to CEO Smithburg, was a replacement hospital "with a new model, less reliant on public dollars," and a "new mission," focused on generating revenue. As a result of LSU's drive to establish a new "teaching" hospital, geared for research and not serving the poor, the agency even returned a $345 million advance grant from FEMA, money intended to reopen Charity (Maggi 2005). LSU then entered into a continuing legal battle with FEMA to get over $600 million, which authorities argue is needed to replace the hospital they claimed that was more than 50% damaged. The new, as of yet (2010) unbuilt hospital, would be part of a new "bio-medical complex" built away from the original site of Charity, and on a 67 acre residential neighborhood now occupied by many homeowners that returned and rebuilt their flood damaged homes (Save Charity Hospital 2010). The 67 acre site itself would be part of the larger Greater New Orleans BioSciences Economic Development District (GNOBEDD), established by the state legislature in 2005, with its own taxing and bonding power. Encompassing 1500 acres, the mission of GNOBEDD is "growing both the programmatic and physical development of the biosciences sector of the New Orleans economy." Instead of providing health care for the poor and uninsured, the new hospital would be part of a larger initiative to "encourage the bioscience industry to locate within the district . . . and build a globally competitive innovative economy" (New Orleans BioInnovations Center 2010). Thus, consistent with how neoliberal reforms operate, the State of Louisiana's role in health care did not disappear, but rather the mission changed, from meeting the needs of the poor and uninsured, to facilitating the profit-making ventures of the bio-medical industry. The neoliberal reform of the state denied not only the right to work for many Charity hospital employees—who were fired, like public school teachers—but also, with the closure of a public hospital that was the primary source of health care for 40% of the pre-Katrina population, a right to health care, and even life. Indeed, a study by City Health Director Dr. Kevin Stephens found that the New Orleans mortality rate for the first six months of 2006 was 47% higher than the pre-Katrina level, due, in great part, to the closure of Charity and the dearth of affordable health care (Stoddard 2007).

The third component of the post-Katrina assault on public services, and maybe the most well publicized, was the demolition of public housing, home to some 15,000 low-income New Orleanians, almost all African-Americans. The pre-Katrina downsizing of public housing (in New Orleans and across the country) was facilitated by the Clinton administration's (1992–2000) HOPE VI privatization program, and the ending, in 1995, of the "one for one" rule—embraced by then Mayor Marc Morial—that required the replacement of every demolished unit of public housing. With the "lifting" of this poor-peoples protection, and the elimination, in the same year, of a locally appointed board to oversee the city's Housing Authority of New Orleans (HANO), the structures were in place to massively downsize the system. Between 1995 and 2005 the number of units was cut in half, from over 14,000, to under 8,000 units. Following the storm, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—having taken direct control of HANO in 2002—with the full support of the Nagin administration, closed five of the conventional developments, blocking the return of former residents. Authorities targeted the "projects"—sturdy brick structures built in the 1940s and 1950s—for immediate demolition even though they withstood the storm much

better than most of the private housing stock, and served as hurricane protection for many poor, black families that could not evacuate. The dynamic public housing movement was able to force open the Iberville development, but four others—Laffite, C.J. Peete, St. Bernard, and most of B.W. Cooper—eventually met the wrecking ball. The use of force to adjudicate between competing rights was most dramatically expressed at the December 20, 2007 city council meeting where New Orleans police tasered, beat, pepper-sprayed and arrested demonstrators who attempted to register their opposition to demolition.[17]

Drawing Lessons from Post-Katrina New Orleans

The struggles unleashed in the aftermath of Katrina represent a dramatic case of the racialized—due to the way race is embedded in U.S. urban development—class struggle for the city. The ruling class, at a local, regional, and national level, carried out a concerted effort to exercise their right to the city, to restructure New Orleans along lines to advance their power and profits, a goal Harvey (20005) argues is the driving force behind the neoliberal restructuring agenda. The local ruling class, for example, through the BNOBC, pushed to create a whiter and wealthier New Orleans—to change the demographics, as James Reiss phrased it—that would better suit their needs. In another key terrain of the racialized class struggle, the ruling class, at all levels, moved aggressively to further the "neoliberalization" of public services. The dismantling of public schools, for example, *decreased* the power of workers, *increased* the power of corporations to shape how schools are organized and what type of labor power—future workers—is produced, and *expanded* areas of profit-making to sectors previously closed off.

Despite impressive gains, the ruling class initiative, as we saw, did not proceed unopposed. In fact, mass pressure, from homeowners and others, defeated the BNOBC's green spacing plan, designed to remake the demographics and politics of the city. Public Housing residents—the most stigmatized section of the New Orleans community—and their allies were able to mount a sustained social movement that reopened one development, kept the wrecking ball away from four others for over two years while they brought attention to the issue nationally and internationally, and effectively challenged the legitimacy of the "deconcentrating poverty" and other rationales invoked to legitimate demolishing public housing. The grassroots Committee to Reopen Charity Hospital has been the center of a campaign that has kept a powerful state and local-level "growth coalition" at bay for over four years in their effort to reopen Charity Hospital and stop the demolition of the lower mid-city neighborhood. Furthermore, the social movements have not simply been on the defensive but, like the ruling class, have used the storm to envision their own restructuring plan, to argue another city, country and world are possible. The deep racial and class inequality, and infrastructural decay, exposed by Katrina necessitates, "radical reconstructionists" argue, a "third reconstruction" (Morrison 2010). That is, racially and economically just reconstruction requires a massive, federally funded public works program—with direct government employment at prevailing wage—to rebuild public services and infrastructure in New Orleans, the entire Gulf Coast, and, eventually, throughout the entire country. A longer historical trajectory will be needed to assess whether the working class—such as Nicaragua and Mexico following earthquakes in 1972 and 1985, respectively, and even the Great flood of 1927 that devastated Louisiana and other states along the Mississippi River (see Barry 1997)—can fully exploit the political opportunities and mount a political challenge.

The findings of this study do indicate that to exploit the legitimacy crisis produced by ruling class' neoliberal reconstruction efforts, the radical reconstructionists will have to confront several ideological and organizational obstacles. The first impediment is what

Howells and Arena (2009) call traditional or "neoliberal voluntarism." Foundations, non-profits and other components of what Joan Roelofs (2003: 22) terms the "protective layer of capitalism," captured and contained the genuine desire among many people, especially youth, to address the injustices Katrina unmasked. The idealism and energy of hundreds of thousands of volunteers that trekked to the region after Katrina was, largely, safely funneled into self-help non-profit projects that not only do not challenge, but in many ways abet the neoliberal agenda. What is needed, instead, is a "movement voluntarism" that connects volunteers with the social movements. A second trench that will need to be traversed is the business unionism "partnership" model, exemplified by, with some exceptions, the teacher union, as well as the "progressive" Service Employees International Union, AFLCIO investors, and the building trade unions, who have all collaborated in the destruction of public services and communities in post-Katrina New Orleans, and hobbled any popular challenge (Arena 2007; Morrison 2010). Maybe most problematic are a variety of "radical," primarily post-Katrina, grassroots, non-profits, registered with the federal government as tax-exempt 501 (c) 3 organizations that subsist through grants from a variety of corporate foundations. These organizations, such as Safe Streets/Safe Communities, New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, Louisiana Justice Institute, ACORN, Common Ground Relief, Critical Resistance, and the disbanded Peoples Hurricane Relief Fund, often mouth radical discourse. Nonetheless, their funding from such entities as the Ford, Soros, and Rockefeller foundations, and government agencies like the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), many of which are bankrolling neoliberal reform efforts, compromise these non-profits. For example, the well known community organization ACORN received millions of dollars from HUD after Katrina and, unsurprisingly, refused to particulate in the public housing movement (Howells 2009). The undemocratic, financially and politically compromised, non-profit model of organizing is a third critical obstacle that must be overcome before the working class in New Orleans, and across the country, can mount a challenge needed to reclaim their right to the city.

Notes

1. Carr & Meitrodt (2005). This article includes other revealing comments, ranging from academics to developers. For an overview of celebratory comments from U.S. Senator David Vitter to the American Enterprise Institute, see Arena (2007). For a searing critique of how liberal sociologists and the Democratic Party—with allied think tank, the Brookings Institution, framed and touted the "opportunities" created by Katrina, and how they could be exploited, see Reed and Steinberg (2006).
2. See Harvey (2005: 70–81) and Brenner and Theodore (2002: 352) on the distinction between neoliberalism as an ideology and its actual implementation.
3. Rivlin (2005). Reportedly there were three African-Americans who participated: Dan Packer, head of Energy-New Orleans; renowned jazz musician Wynton Marsalis, who participated by speakerphone; and State Senator Derrick Shepherd, who was not invited, but had been tipped off about it by former mayor Marc Morial's brother, Jacques, and encouraged to attend. For the most comprehensive analysis of the meeting to date, see Cecil (2009: 44–51).
4. The African-American members included co-chair Barbara Major, head of a non-profit health clinic and close associate of Canizaro; Kim Boyle, an attorney with a powerful local law firm, Phelps Dunbar; Rev. Fred Luter, Pastor at Franklin Baptist Church; Wynton Marsalis, the renowned jazz musician; Aldon McDonald, President of the Black-owned Liberty Bank; Dan Packer, the head of the Energy corporation's local utility operation; Anthony Patton, head of his own advertising agency; David White, McDonald franchise owner and Nagin confidant; Oliver Thomas, city councilman; the Hispanic member was lawyer and real estate developer Cesar Burgos; the white members included Canizaro, a banker and developer;

Boysie Bollinger, shipbuilder and major Republican donor, and Bush ally; Catholic Archbishop Alfred Hughes; James Reiss, an investor; Gary Solomon, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Crescent Bank and Trust, and "venture capitalist," involved in businesses from daiquiri shops and restaurants to payday loan operations; Scott Cowen, President of Tulane University; co-chair Mel LaGarde, President and CEO of the Delta region of the Hospital Corporation of America. Canizaro, Solomon, Bollinger, Cowen, and Reiss were all members of the New Orleans Business Council, the most powerful business association in the city. BNOBC (2009).

5. For more on the advisory committee's make-up, see Carr (2005); on funding, see ULI (2005).
6. For evidence on the term's increasing use, and efforts to legitimate its application—and denounce—developments in post-Katrina New Orleans, see Donze and Eggler, 2005.
7. For further critique of the "reverse racism" charge and contextualization of the comments, see Arena (2006), Wise (2006), and Cecil (2009: 79–94).
8. In Nagin's first mayoral race he did not receive a majority of the black vote. Yet, with the changed demographics post-Katrina, and emerging white contenders, he would clearly need a majority of the black vote in the Spring 2006 election, especially as his former wealthy white backers began to abandon him. See Cecil (2009) on this latter development.
9. For more on newspapers and other local media as central components of local "pro-growth" coalitions, see Logan, Bridges, and Crowder (1999).
10. Contentious school board meetings raised particular resonance for Cowen, since his wife, Kathy Reidlinger—the principal of a selective admission elementary magnet school before the storm, that was, post-Katrina, converted into a semi-privatized charter school and expanded into a junior and high school—was a prime target of "polarizing" activists, such as Assata Olugbala and Albert "Chui" Clark.
11. Tulane's central role in firing New Orleans public school teachers and abrogating their union contract is consistent with how they treated their own workers in the wake of Katrina. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) censored Tulane for lifting tenure, firing professors, and restructuring departments without faculty input—all of which violated the Faculty Handbook and other policy documents—as part of their post-Katrina restructuring plan, dubbed "Bold Renewal." The AAUP also castigated Cowen and the board of trustees to justify layoffs and other "emergency measures" (Bernofsky 2009). In addition, the Belfor Corp., a politically connected firm contracted by the University for various repairs, was sued by the Southern Poverty Law Center for not paying workers, mostly immigrants, overtime pay while they labored at Tulane and other sites (SPLC 2006). For further evidence of the Teach for America program displacing veteran teachers, see Toppo (2009).
12. For a detailed outline of how the threshold of "failing schools" were lowered under the bill, and targeted the New Orleans district, see AFT (2006: 13–15). Most of the African-American legislative delegation, except for State Senator Ann Duplessis, a Liberty Bank executive, whose boss was BNOC member Alden McDonald, voted against the bill. Nonetheless, members of the delegation, such as, Karen Carter and Edwin Murray, played key roles in passing pre-Katrina legislation enabling a state take-over of local schools.
13. The firing was preceded by the board's placing of all workers on "disaster leave" without pay on September 15. A lawsuit delayed the dismissal order until March, 2006. The report by the Center for Community Change (2006) provides a detailed chronology of actions taken by state and local authorities to dismantle New Orleans public schools.
14. For an overview of the division of labor in the charter complex, including the central roles played by New Schools for New Orleans, New Leaders for New Schools, and the Cowen Institute for Public Education Initiatives, see New Schools for New Orleans (2010).
15. New Schools New Leaders (2009); Quigley (2007). For more on the myriad of problems in the second tier RSD schools, see AFT (2006); Ritea (2007); and Warner and Simon (2007). For evidence that charter schools perform better simply because they take on the best students, and dump the rest into traditional public schools, see Van Lier (2009).
16. Nossiter (2005); for a detailed chronology of events surrounding Charity Hospital, post-Katrina, see Ott (2007).
17. For footage of the December 20, 2007 city council hearing, see YouTube (2007). Documentation on pre- and post-Katrina Public Housing is taken from Arena (2010, 2007).

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Chapter 16

Voter Suppression

The Attack on Rights

Lorraine C. Minnite and Frances Fox Piven

Vote suppression first and foremost is a political strategy for winning elections. It is as old as the Republic and continues to this day, in many forms.[1] The mostly hidden history of vote suppression runs parallel to the grand narrative of the expansion of the right to vote. It is a mistake to read the history of democracy in the United States as a linear progression toward an ever-widening electorate, and to ignore the perpetual countermovement such progress has always engendered.

The Formal Right to Vote

The right to vote is elemental in modern democracy, for what is democracy but the control of the powerful apparatus of government by ordinary people? Democracy promises a political community consisting of persons of equal standing before the law. Through the mechanism of the vote, the people choose their representatives and practice self-governance. And yet, in the United States, voting is not quite a right – at least not quite a right like other basic civil rights we believe we have as Americans, protected by the U.S. Constitution. As the legal scholar Garrett Epps puts it, "The right to vote of citizens of the United States . . . remains a kind of stepchild in the family of American rights . . . "[2] because it does not appear in the Bill of Rights and is only a negative right, protected by prohibitions on forms of discrimination in voting rather than affirmed.

The Constitution provides for the direct election of members of Congress, and federal oversight of the manner in which the states conduct elections.[3] Bans on discrimination in voting by race, "sex" and age appear in the Fifteenth (1870), Nineteenth (1920), and Twenty-Sixth (1971) Amendments, respectively. The first direct prohibition in the Fifteenth Amendment states that the right to vote is not to be "denied or abridged on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The Nineteenth and Twenty-Sixth Amendments use the same language: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State . . . " on account of "sex" or age (being "eighteen years of age or older"), respectively.

The Constitution comes closest to protecting against discrimination in voting on account of property or a lack of wealth or income with the Twenty-Fourth Amendment (1964), which prohibits the denial or abridgement of the right of citizens of the United States to vote "by reason of failure to pay poll tax or other tax." Each of the four Amendments prohibiting discrimination in voting for various classes of citizens includes a direct delegation of power to the Congress to enforce the prohibitions "by appropriate legislation."

Voter Suppression as an American Institution

The story of democracy in the United States is one of slow progress with episodes of expanding rights followed by swift contraction. Over the long history of voter suppression in the United States, methods to exclude voters of the lowest political castes have varied, but the justifications for blocking the vote have not. The on-going efforts to suppress voting have always been based on assumptions of inferiority and unworthiness grounded in racism, fear, a distaste for the lower classes, and competition for resources.

As a political strategy, the motive for vote suppression is intensified by the dynamics of the two-party system and the winner-take-all rules that characterize U.S. electoral-representative arrangements. Given the institutional logic, parties and campaigns have two options: they can try to overwhelm their opponents by pursuing inclusive strategies to expand the electorate with appeals to new voters, or they can seek to constrict voting by their opponents' constituents.[4] The two major parties are broad coalitions of diverse and often conflicting interests, loosely organized across the fragmented and decentralized federal system.[5] Expanding the base of support to include new groups with potentially new demands can destabilize and threaten entrenched politicians and the powerful interests that dominate party decision-making. Thus, politicians and political parties have another powerful incentive to adopt the alternative strategy of voter suppression, especially when election contests are tight and turnout is likely to be high.

Institutional incentives are matched by opportunities created by the peculiar American approach to conducting elections. There is no uniform system of election administration in the United States.[6] The two major parties essentially run elections and partisan politicians make the rules. In many states, local election boards and sometimes staff are appointed by politicians or local party leaders, and precinct workers are chosen from lists of party loyalists. Under the Constitution, the states have the responsibility for administering elections, which in practice means that instead of one national system and set of rules, there are fifty different electoral systems and a proliferation of laws and rules governing the conditions under which ballots are cast and counted. Unlike almost any other area of public administration, the rules for conducting elections are heavily weighted toward statutory law, rather than administrative rules, a reflection of the outsized role incumbent politicians play in protecting their incumbency. Harris' comprehensive study of election administration in the 1930s first noted this phenomenon,[7] and it is no less true today.

In sum, the structural features of the U.S. Constitution, an ambiguous right to vote, the party system, vote counting rules that require the winner to win just one more vote than the loser, and state laws regulating a highly decentralized, complicated system for administering elections that reflects partisan advantage, explain in good measure the long history of blocking the vote in the United States. But the historical legacies and practices concerning racial subordination and class domination explain more. Democracy threatens economic power, which in a capitalist system based on the exploitation of labor, is never equally distributed.

Forms of Voter Suppression

Vote suppression takes many forms. We can group them roughly into two categories: direct efforts to obstruct citizens trying to register or vote, and facially unbiased legal strategies to shrink and shape the electorate through the administration of the electoral process. First, and most obvious are the direct acts of 'keeping down the vote' of particular constituencies practiced in conjunction with electoral campaigns and consisting of misinformation cam-

paigns and other deceptive electoral practices; outright intimidation of voters through "caging" or voter challenges; the manipulation or purging of voter registration lists in the lead up to an election; and finally, the use of specious voter fraud allegations resulting in intimidating investigations to scare voters away from the polls. These tactics have been used together with legislative efforts prompted by the false threat of voter fraud to erect laws like those requiring specific forms of voter identification that have disproportionate negative effects on certain unwanted constituencies. At the same time, ancient notions of citizenship and worthiness continue to justify outright denial of the right to vote to large numbers of Americans, including youth, incarcerated individuals, and resident non-citizens. We first discuss the major forms of direct voter suppression tactics, and then highlight how these tactics help shape the laws that institutionalize a shrunken electorate by restricting the fullest participation in elections and suppress the votes of marginalized groups.[8]

Misinformation Campaigns and Other Deceptive Practices

There are many documented examples of under-the-radar misinformation campaigns in recent elections, including individuals roaming near polling sites with official-looking insignias to intimidate voters; flyers with wrong election dates and false information about voting rules; and deceptive online messages and robocalls deliberately providing false information to suppress voting. These efforts tend to target racial and language minorities.[9] Even prior to the 2016 presidential election, when anonymous foreign trolls with ties to the Russian government engaged in a massive social media campaign to disrupt a national election,[10] deceptive electoral practices were resurgent, as catalogued by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and other election protection groups.[11] For example, during the 2002 New Hampshire U.S. Senate race between Republican John Sununu and Democrat Jeanne Shaheen, national and state Republican Party operatives engaged in a conspiracy to block get-out-the-vote efforts organized by five local Democratic party organizations and the Manchester Professional Firefighters Association.[12] On Election Day, phone banks set up to generate calls to voters to urge them to vote or to offer transportation to the polls were the target of a phone jamming scheme by the Republicans that barraged the offices with eight hundred calls in eighty-five minutes or about one call every six seconds, quickly shutting down the operations.[13] The dirty tricks were planned to go on all day, but ended prematurely when the state party's legal counsel fearing criminal prosecution ordered party officials to abandon the effort. By then, hundreds of voters in New Hampshire may have missed their opportunity to vote. The Republican edged out the Democrat by 19,000 votes, and two years later, after a federal investigation and demands by the Democrats for criminal prosecution, the first of four Republican political operatives, including the former executive director of the New Hampshire Republican Party, and the Northeast field director for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, were convicted of, or pleaded guilty to federal crimes.[14]

Voter Intimidation, Caging and Challenging Voters

One technique for intimidating voters involves challenging the validity of their registration records. "Voter caging" refers to another dark arts campaign practice of identifying and targeting registered voters likely to vote for an opponent by sending them non-forwardable mail, and compiling a list of those whose mail is returned. The list is then used to launch formal challenges to these voters on grounds that they are not properly registered, and to intimidate and potentially block their votes.[15] For example, in the lead up to the 2004 presidential

election, staff for the campaign of President George W. Bush, who was running for re-election, sent letters to a list of newly registered voters in Duval County, Florida. Mail was returned for 2,663 voters who were then placed on a list that was emailed to the national research director of the Republican National Committee. Once the list became public, independent researchers analyzed it comparing the names to Florida registration data (which includes the race of the registrant) and found that blacks were disproportionately represented on the list. In the media storm that followed, Republican Party officials confirmed that the list had been sent to county officials, but they denied it had been prepared to challenge voters. Federal officials from the U.S. Department of Justice eventually secured an agreement that no voters would be challenged at the polls using the controversial Republican Party caging list.[16]

Manipulation and Purging of Voter Registration Lists

Before the passage of the National Voter Registration Act in 1993 (NVRA), which for the first time in U.S. history limited the conditions under which voters may be removed from the registration rolls for purposes of federal elections, purging voters who had not cast a vote over some number of years was the most common method for removing them from the rolls.[17] There is a long history of editing voter registration lists for partisan advantage going back at least to the 1870s.[18] In the 1946 Democratic gubernatorial primary in Georgia, supporters of segregationist Governor Eugene Talmadge used a variety of tactics, including the purging of more than 16,000 eligible black voters from the rolls, to win the election.[19] Even after the national Democratic Party came to depend on black votes, big-city white Democrats were not necessarily ready to cede power, and used voter purges to fight off African-American candidates for mayor.[20] In the 1950s, Republicans began developing a *repetoire* of strategies – caging, voter challenges, intimidation, and more – to reduce the vote in targeted communities, a *repetoire* that was nationalized and christened "Operation Eagle Eye" in 1964.[21] The aggressive effort to purge voters was an on-going issue as the NVRA was being drafted. During the 1986 U.S. Senate race in Louisiana, for example, the Republican National Committee sponsored a "ballot integrity" program in which, "they challenged the registration of 31,000 voters in high-Democratic, high-minority precincts. A State court ordered a halt to this program prior to the election."[22] But before it was shut down, a memorandum from one regional Republican political director to another described the probable effect of the voter purge effort in the Louisiana race: "I know this race is really important to you. I would guess that this program will eliminate at least 60–80,000 folks from the rolls. . . . If it's a close race, which I'm assuming it is, this could keep the black vote down considerably."[23]

Voter Fraud Investigations

Voter fraud investigations have been used to tar minority voter registration drives and intimidate activists and voters. One prominent example is a 1985 federal voter fraud prosecution in Alabama. The government investigation, conducted at a cost of millions of dollars, led to 210 charges of vote fraud against eight voting rights activists in Perry County, seven of whom were black. Only one of the eight charged was found guilty, and on only four counts in a trial before an all-white jury (a conviction overturned on appeal). Some of the activists were veteran foot soldiers of the Civil Rights movement and were continuing the struggle for the right to vote by working in the Alabama Black Belt at the local level in places where minority whites continued to control the reins of government. The federal investigations of black activists who worked to assist poor blacks navigate the mechanics of voting must be under-

stood in the context of President Ronald Reagan's reelection strategy which depended on Republican majorities in the South. The economically marginalized counties of the Black Belt were places where blacks had gained some measure of political rights as a result of the struggles of the civil rights movement. By the early 1980s, registered black voters outnumbered whites in the Black Belt, and more than half of the local county elected officials in the ten majority-black western Alabama counties were black. Federal fraud prosecutions were a response to the black voter mobilization campaigns that threatened the Reagan strategy. First and foremost, they were meant to intimidate black voter activists and chill black voting in anticipation of the 1984 and 1986 federal elections. With Reagan's victory in 1980, the Republican Party was beginning to make inroads into Alabama politics. Jeremiah Denton became the first Republican to win a U.S. Senate race in Alabama in the twentieth century, riding on Reagan's coattails. But Denton's victory was precarious; he won by only a slim margin statewide, just 36,000 votes out of 1.25 million cast, with little support in the Black Belt counties where he lost in a landslide to his Democratic opponent. There were small towns in west Alabama where Denton got no votes at all. His prospects for reelection in 1986, therefore, were not good because he would not have Ronald Reagan on the top of the ticket to help pull out his vote.[24]

Voter Suppression as a Function of Election Law

After the Civil War, politicians in the North, and especially in the South, motivated by racism and partisan competition, deployed direct forms of vote suppression to shape the electorate. Once in power, the road was paved for legislative efforts to institutionalize vote suppression in the law. The United States was rapidly changing. The violence of the Civil War had laid waste to American society, the land, and the economy. Economists have estimated that in today's dollars, the total cost of the war was somewhere near 300 billion dollars.[25] Direct costs alone equaled one-and-a-half times the total gross national product of the United States in 1860. Environmental devastation was massive, more than 625,000 men were dead and another half million were wounded. Some small towns and communities had no young men left to rebuild the farms or labor at a trade.

The institution of slavery, which had been so integral to the development of American capitalism and the state,[26] was abolished. When Congress moved swiftly after the Civil War to reconstruct the Southern states for entry back into the Union, it established widespread black (male) suffrage.[27] Between 1866 and 1867, the eligible among the black population increased from less than one percent, to over eighty percent, with all of the increase in the old Confederacy.[28] In the redemption period that followed the collapse of Reconstruction, African-American men were effectively stripped of their newly granted rights through direct forms of intimidation, mainly terroristic violence, and then the erection of inventive rules designed to circumvent the Fifteenth Amendment's prohibition on vote denial or abridgement on account of race. For example, to ensure white supremacy in South Carolina where blacks of voting age outnumbered whites, Governor and then U.S. Senator "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman led the state's efforts to resurrect segregation and racial subordination after the Civil War.[29] Historian J. Morgan Kousser observes that with respect to black disfranchisement, South Carolina's polity was farther advanced by 1881 than that of any other state.[30] In 1882, the state adopted a new registration law that permitted the local registrar to add the names of any qualified voter in his precinct who failed to register, a means of ensuring white Democrats outnumbered Republicans and blacks and an invitation to fraud.

Years later, in 1900, Tillman boasted of his state's success in stripping blacks of the vote. On the floor of the U.S. Senate, he said, "I am only standing here to advertise the fact that

the State of South Carolina has disfranchised all of the colored race that it could under the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments. We have done our level best; we have scratched our heads to find out how we could eliminate the last one of them . . . We stuffed ballot boxes. We shot them. We are not ashamed of it . . . "[31] Thus, direct forms of voter suppression were used to establish the second form of voter suppression, disfranchisement as a function of election law and the electoral institutions created by election law. We see this pattern over the course of U.S. history, but especially after the Civil War, in the on-going use of violence and intimidation against black citizens who wanted to vote in the era of Jim Crow segregation, and also in the changes to state constitutions and election laws to erect facially race-neutral bulwarks against black voting in the 1880s and 1890s, and beyond, particularly but not exclusively in the South.

In the North, even before the Civil War, disfranchisement of women and blacks occurred while white men of little property were enfranchised. One of the earliest acts of voter disfranchisement through legal maneuver took place in New Jersey, when in 1807, the legislature adopted a law declaring that, "no person shall vote in any state or county election for officers in the government of the United States or of this state, unless such person be a free, white male citizen."[32] Prior to this, property-owning women could and did vote; both the state's constitution of 1776, and an election law of 1790, granted the right to vote to all "inhabitants" otherwise qualified, which was interpreted locally as meaning that property-owning women could vote.[33] Until 1821, white and black men in New York could vote under a modest property requirement. In 1821, changes to the state constitution that dropped property requirements for white men, but retained and increased them for black "men of color" disfranchised the vast majority of black men.[34]

Perhaps most important for where we stand today are laws that disfranchise people who are convicted of crimes, or what is referred to as "infamous crimes," a practice that has a long history in English, European and Roman law.[35] In general, infamous crimes were those that prevented the perpetrator from testifying under oath in court. Between 1776 and 1821, most of the states disfranchised those convicted of infamous crimes. By 1920, nearly all states had felon disfranchisement laws on the books. In the South, the laws were usually more detailed and included lesser offenses that were believed to be committed more by blacks than whites (i.e., vagrancy, stealing meat, or participating in a common law marriage).[36] Scholars have documented the wide use of criminal disfranchisement in the South after Reconstruction to suppress the African-American vote.[37] In the wake of the Civil Rights movement and demands for political equality, felon disfranchisement was again on the agenda in the 1960s and early 1970s, demonstrating the seesawing forward-backward advance and retreat in the struggle for voting rights. By this time, however, all but a handful of states maintained bars on voting by those convicted of felony (infamous) or specific crimes; in about half the states, the exclusion was permanent because it could be lifted only through a pardon.

As 18-year-olds won the right to vote in 1971, voting rights activists turned their attention to felon disfranchisement laws, which always stood on shaky theoretical and principled grounds. For example, advocates argued that the loss of civil rights was a disproportionate form of retribution for most crimes. Moreover, losing the right to vote does not limit the capacity of criminals to commit further crimes, nor does it deter crime. And expulsion from the polity has no role in rehabilitation.

There were very few legal challenges to felon disfranchisement laws before the 1960s.[38] Then, in 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court shut the door on Fourteenth Amendment challenges in *Richardson v. Ramirez,*[39] overturning a ruling of the California Supreme Court striking down the criminal disfranchisement clause of the California Constitution, which had permanently barred those convicted of infamous crimes "reasonably . . . deemed to

constitute a threat to the integrity of the elective process."[40] The *Richardson* ruling is based on Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment, which states that representation in Congress will be reduced for any state that denies the franchise to adult male citizens "except for participation in rebellion, or other crime." Chief Justice William Rehnquist reasoned that the authors of this clause must have intended to permit the states to disfranchise convicted criminals.[41]

As of 2016, Christopher Uggen and his colleagues estimate that 6.1 million people are disfranchised due to a felony conviction, compared to 1.17 million in 1976. This accounts for approximately 2.5 percent of the total U.S. voting age population, or one in forty adults. Twelve states disfranchise people post-sentence, accounting for roughly half of the entire disfranchised population. In six states – Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee and Virginia – more than seven percent of the adult population is disfranchised, with Florida accounting for more than a quarter of the disfranchised population nationally.[42]

In our era of mass incarceration and racial inequality in the criminal justice system, felon disfranchisement is disproportionately suffered by African-Americans, one in thirteen of whom of voting age are disfranchised at a rate that is more than four times greater than that of people who are not African-American. In the four states with the highest proportions of their adult populations disfranchised – Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia – more than one in five African-Americans is barred from voting as a result.[43]

The combination of institutional arrangements established by partisan and racially-motivated electoral laws, and political strategies animated by anti-democratic and racist motivations, keep voter suppression alive today. Racist appeals once again are what politicians on the Right use to gin up their following. The Democratic Party is largely a multi-racial coalition; the Republican Party is more and more an all-white party, which at least partly explains why *voter suppression today is a tool of the Republican Party alone*.

Voter Suppression and the New American Electorate

Recent federal elections demonstrate the growing importance of voter mobilization and demobilization for American politics. Scholars date the current revival of voter suppression tactics to 2000, and the contested election debacle in Florida, which presented a case study of how partisan election administration, restrictive and racially-biased voting rules, and legal maneuvering can come together to suppress voting.[44] For example, African-American voters were targeted by the Republicans through a variety of tactics, including the use of deliberately sloppy felon lists that included thousands of known errors in an attempt to deny black voters ballots under Florida's severe felon disfranchisement law.[45] Reports to civil rights groups suggested that black voters were also asked for multiple forms of identification and denied ballots when they were unable to produce all of the ID's. In Gadsden County, one of the poorest counties in the state and the only one where the population is more than half African-American, the ballot spoilage and discard rate was 12.4 percent, the highest of any Florida county. Election officials recounting ballot cards said that they sometimes guessed at which candidate voters intended to vote for. The Gadsden County elections supervisor, a white conservative Democrat who spoke openly of giving money to Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush, refused offers by county commissioners to station more polling places in neighborhoods to accommodate the increase in registered voters stimulated by the presidential contest. In the popular media at the time, black disfranchisement took a back-seat to the drama of the Florida recount, but the revival of vote suppression tactics, including using hired mobs and the Supreme Court to shut down the Florida recount, were lessons

learned by a new generation of Republican Party operatives, some of whom were then rewarded with prominent jobs in the Bush Justice Department.

Partisan-motivated vote suppression efforts continued, albeit somewhat under the radar at first, in the 2002, 2004 and in the 2006 midterm elections. Tactics included race-based targeting of African-American voter activists, misinformation campaigns and the distribution of erroneous election information in African-American neighborhoods, the imposition of new restrictions on voter registration drives, strategically timed voter roll purges to cause confusion at the polls, and the widespread use of spurious voter fraud allegations to build support for the imposition of restrictive voter identification laws.[46]

The 2008 election and its aftermath revved up the usually half-hidden wars in American politics over the size and shape of the electorate. Inevitably, the nomination of Barack Obama as the first African-American candidate for the presidency of a major party had an electrifying effect on blacks. Turnout spiked in 2008 and remained high in 2012 among blacks and other minority groups.[47] Republicans and their right-wing allies also rose to the challenge and joined the traditional contest over who gets to vote, gaining momentum from the visible presence of an African-American president and the prospects of a rising new majority of racial minorities, women, and youth that the electoral data suggested. The response was an intensification of the traditional tactics of voter suppression through the introduction of new (and unnecessary) legal requirements or the elimination of procedures that had made the path to the ballot easier. New laws requiring photo identification were adopted by Republican-dominated state legislatures, voting periods were shortened, and restrictions on volunteer voter registration groups were introduced or restored where they had lapsed with the passage of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993.

The new "voting wars"[48] continue the historical role of vote suppression in the story of American democracy. At the same time, the sheer scale of revived efforts to suppress the vote has lifted the veil on the dark arts of elections, giving rise to a new awareness and effort to protect the vote and expand participation. Thus, voting rights advocates have had much to defend since the election of Barack Obama in 2008. For example, following the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Crawford v. Marion County Election Board* (2010),[49] upholding Indiana's strict photo identification law, states under unified Republican Party control rapidly passed restrictive voter identification laws and other vote suppressive measures on the false pretense of stopping voter fraud.[50]

Another important Supreme Court decision handed down in 2013, *Shelby County v. Holder,*[51] dealt a blow to voting rights by invalidating the coverage formula of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, neutering its innovative pre-clearance feature. Under Section 5 of the Act, states with histories of racially discriminatory voting laws were prohibited from enacting new electoral rules without first securing prior approval by the U.S. Justice Department dependent on a showing that the new laws would not have a racially discriminatory effect. The Court's ruling made pre-clearance inoperable.

The *Shelby County* decision further emboldened Republican state lawmakers, who then doubled-down to push for ever more inventive new restrictions that target the so-called "rising electorate" of youth and racial minorities who were the core of the Obama electoral coalition. For example, Arizona, Alabama, Georgia and Kansas all passed documentary proof-of-citizenship requirements to register to vote, and while some of these laws were tied up in court, a few of these states even created dual registration systems, one for voters permitted to vote in state elections if they had provided documentary proof of citizenship when they registered to vote, and one for voters permitted to vote in federal elections where they had not. In New Hampshire, where paranoia about college students being bussed in from out-of-state to vote has a long history, the Republican legislature and governor approved a

proof-of-residency law to hinder voting by college students who have the right to vote from where they live under the state's constitution, even if it is a college dormitory.

The elimination of federal preclearance rules has facilitated a return to "vote denial" strategies and the American practice of manipulating electoral rules to suppress minority voting. Since 2013, several of the formerly (or partially) covered states, Alabama, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas, all passed or implemented new, stringent photo identification requirements following the invalidation of the coverage formula. In North Carolina and Texas federal courts have found that these laws were adopted with the intent to discriminate against racial minority groups.[52] Arizona enacted a new rule that makes it a felony to collect and turn in another person's absentee ballot. A study by the Leadership Conference Education Fund found that, "By sheer numbers and scale, Arizona is the leading closer of polling places in the aftermath of *Shelby,*" with every county eliminating polling places, "most on a massive scale."[53] Polling place consolidations and reductions in Maricopa County, for example, led to five-hour-or-more-long lines to vote in the state's Presidential Preference Primary election in 2016.[54] Both the poll closures and changes to the state's absentee ballot laws would have been subject to preclearance prior to the *Shelby County* decision.

Advocates have compiled reports on the proliferating new voting restrictions since 2013.[55] It is fair to say that *Shelby County* returned the country to a pre-1965 legal landscape in that there are now fewer law enforcement tools available to the federal government to *prevent* efforts by states and localities to engage in subterfuge and the manipulation of electoral rules that could harm minority voting rights. It is true, of course, as Chief Justice Roberts points out in his *Shelby County* majority opinion, that we are not the country we were in 1965. The Voting Rights Act, the Twenty-fourth Amendment, and other laws and court decisions that promote equal protection and full participation, and outlaw some of the cruder instruments of voter suppression – for example, the literacy test and poll taxes – as well as any "voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure" to be "imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color,"[56] have strengthened our democracy. But it is still difficult to overstate the significance of what has been lost.[57]

The 2016 presidential election of Donald Trump further heightened the public's awareness of voter suppression and how it can be achieved through the manipulation of electoral rules. For the second time in sixteen years, the winner of the Electoral College vote lost the popular vote, an obvious distortion of democratic principles.[58] Trump's victory over his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton, was a narrow one. A shift of just 78,000 votes in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania out of 136.8 million cast nationally, would have resulted in the election of the first woman president of the United States. Moreover, Clinton actually defeated Trump in the popular vote by nearly three million ballots, the largest margin of an Electoral College loser in the nation's history. Trump responded to his massive loss of the popular vote with unfounded claims that some three to five million illegal votes were cast in the election. He then convened a controversial commission to investigate this alleged voter fraud, which given the purported scale of corruption and the utter lack of evidence to support the charge, only heightened awareness of how spurious claims about voter fraud serve as cover for politicians who seek to manipulate electoral rules to their own advantage. Before it even started, Trump's Presidential Advisory Commission on Election Integrity collapsed under the weight of multiple lawsuits challenging the scope of its authority, including one brought by one of the Democratic commissioners. But the intent was clear: spread misinformation about voter fraud to justify new restrictions on access to the ballot, along with the threatened the use of the full force of the federal government to investigate the trumped up charges to intimidate certain voters so they stay home.

What Is to be Done?

In the current period, the fear of a Trump presidency gave rise to a large left-leaning "resistance" movement that put electoral politics at the forefront. The movement was encouraged by progressive elected officials, such as U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, a self-proclaimed Democratic socialist, who through their electoral campaigns, demonstrated the possibilities of electoral activism. After Sanders' defeat by Clinton in the Democratic primary, Sanders campaign operatives and volunteers stayed engaged, founding new organizations to promote voting and running for office, especially at the local level.

Much of the opposition to Trump is being driven by the rising electoral constituencies of African-Americans galvanized by the Movement for Black Lives, immigrants and so-called "Dreamers" (undocumented young people brought to the U.S. as small children), youth protesting school shootings and demanding gun control, and women organizing historic marches and the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment in the workplace. Widening opposition to incumbent Republicans and the Republican Party's attacks on social programs and government regulation, led to a historic number of female candidates on the 2018 ballot, some making history as the first African-American and transgender women to win major party nominations for governor in states as diverse or rural as Georgia and Vermont.

The embrace of electoral participation in reaction to the Trump presidency is also building on a growing effort among voting rights advocates to push forward with reforms that could lower barriers to voting in states where enacting those reforms is currently possible. In other words, in response to two decades of an aggressive assault on voting rights by the Republican Party and its political allies on the right, as they try to hold onto power, even as their voter base recedes, voting rights activists and reformers are going on the offensive in those states where the political opposition is weaker. The campaign to modernize voter registration systems, for example, features what the advocates call "automatic voter registration," or AVR. While some promote the idea as a new one, it too is almost as old at the U.S. itself. In 1800, Massachusetts passed the first voter registration law in the new nation, requiring town assessors to draw up "correct and alphabetical" lists of qualified electors annually, submit them to selectmen, and post them for review prior to an election.[59] Similarly, the goal of the 1980s campaign to reform voter registration that led to the passage of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, was to enact legislation that required the registration of citizens whenever they interacted with a government agency. The agency-based method is how AVR is implemented today: eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are automatically registered to vote or have their registration records updated, with an option to decline, and the information is then electronically transmitted to election agencies.

Voter registration modernization through the application of information technologies makes possible today what was difficult to implement in 1993. The first AVR bill was passed in Oregon in 2015, and while it is too early to judge how AVR might reshape Oregon's electorate, in the 2016 election, Oregon experienced the highest turnout in its history (1.98 million ballots), exceeding the previous record in 2004, by some 127,000 votes. More than 100,000 ballots were cast by voters registered through the state's brand new AVR system.[60] As of 2019, over a third of all Americans were living in jurisdictions that either passed or implemented AVR legislation, many with bipartisan support.[61]

Despite these positive developments, the U.S. continues to be one of the most unrepresentative democracies among advanced capitalist countries, and this is an important reason for America's regressive social and economic policies. New research is producing mounting evidence of significant differences in policy preferences between those who vote and those who do not that reflect the different needs for redistributive and social welfare policies

among the poor and working classes.[62] The right to vote has always been the focus of subterranean conflicts in American politics between the propertied and democratic publics. As the nation changes and racial minorities, who are projected to constitute the majority of the population by 2045,[63] seek to use the levers of government to address their problems, efforts to thwart their rise will continue, perhaps with even more desperation than before. The good news is that the hidden history of vote suppression has been exposed by the intensity of the voting wars over the last two decades, giving birth to a new activism of democratic promise.

Notes

1. Spencer Overton, *Stealing Democracy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006); Frances Fox Piven, Lorraine C. Minnite and Margaret Groarke, *Keeping Down the Black Vote* (New York: The New Press, 2009); Tova Andrea Wang, *The Politics of Voter Suppression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012); Zachary Roth, *The Great Suppression* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2016).
2. Garrett Epps, *American Epic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182.
3. Article I, Section 2, directs that the House of Representatives "shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States," whose qualifications shall be the same as those qualified to vote for the members of the most numerous branch of a state's legislature. The Seventeenth Amendment (1913) amends Section 3, providing for the direct election of Senators. Section 4 grants the states the power to determine the "Times, Places, and Manner" of holding elections to choose Representatives and Senators, "but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such regulations, except as to the Places of choosing Senators."
4. Piven, Minnite and Groake, *Ibid*., 15–21.
5. Recent scholarship documents a fraying of the "big tent" qualities that for most of the twentieth century have characterized the two major U.S. political parties, suggesting that the Democrats and Republicans are becoming more internally and ideologically cohesive and coherent.
6. Alec C. Ewald, *The Way We Vote* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009); Kathleen Hale, Robert Montjoy, and Mitchell Brown, *Administering Elections* (New York: Palgrave, 2015).
7. "In no other phase of public administration do the statutes bulk so large and administrative control and supervision so little," writes Harris. See, Joseph P. Harris, *Election Administration in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1934), 7.
8. Much of the discussion in this section draws on Piven, Minnite and Groarke, *Ibid.*
9. Gilda R. Daniels, "Voter Deception," *Indiana Law Review*, 43, no. 2 (2010): 343–388.
10. Office of the Director of National Intelligence, National Intelligence Council, "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections," ICA 2017–01D (January 6, 2017). Accessed June 21, 2019, https://www.dni.gov/files/documents/ICA_2017_01.pdf.
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12. Allen Raymond, *How to Rig an Election* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008). See also the interview of Allen Raymond by journalist Amy Goodman, "How to Rig an Election: Convicted Former GOP Operative Details 2002 New Hampshire Phone Jamming Scheme," *DemocracyNow!* (January 8, 2008), accessed June 21, 2019, https://www.democracynow.org/2008/1/8/how_to_rig_an_election_convicted.
13. Jonathan Finer, "Former GOP Consultant Sentenced to Prison: Va. Man Pleaded Guilty to Making Harassing Phone Calls to N.H. Democrats," *Washington Post*, February 9, 2005, A12.
14. See Richard L. Hasen, *The Voting Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 88–92.
15. Teresa James, "Caging Democracy: A 50-Year History of Partisan Challenges to Minority Voters," Project Vote, Washington, D.C., September, 2007.
16. Piven, Minnite and Groarke, *Ibid.*, 175–176.
17. See, 52 U.S.C. § 20507. See also, Steve Barber, Jim Halpert, Mimi Wright and Frank Litwin, "The Purging of Empowerment: Voter Purge Laws and the Voting Rights Act," *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law*

Review 23, no. 2 (1988): 483–555, 499. As late as 1995, thirty-four states and the District of Columbia had "non-voting" purge laws on the books. See, Jeffrey A. Blomberg, "Note: Protecting the Right Not to Vote from Voter Purge Statutes," *Fordham Law Review* 64, no.3 (1995), 1015–1050.

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19. Joseph L. Bernd, "White Supremacy and the Disfranchisement of Blacks in Georgia, 1946," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 66, n. 4 (Winter, 1982), 492–513.
20. Piven, Minnite and Groarke, *Ibid.,* 48–97.
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24. Piven, Minnite and Groarke *Ibid.,* 190–197; see also, Lorraine C. Minnite, *The Myth of Voter Fraud* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).
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29. Francis Butler Simkin, *Pitchfork Ben Tillman,* with a New Introduction by Orville Vernon Burton (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002 [1944]).
30. J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 84.
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32. Alexander Keyssar, *The Right to Vote* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 54.
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35. Alec C. Ewald, "'Civil Death': The Ideological Paradox of Criminal Disenfranchisement Law in the United States," *Wisconsin Law Review* 5 (2002), 1045–1137; Katherine Irene Pettus, *Felony Disenfranchisement in America* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013).
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37. Gabriel J. Chin, "Reconstruction, Felon Disenfranchisement, and the Right to Vote: Did the Fifteenth Amendment Repeal Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment?" *Georgetown Law Review* 92, no. 2 (2004), 261–262, n18. See also, Edward M. Burmila, "Voter Turnout, Felon Disenfranchisement and Partisan Outcomes in Presidential Elections, 1988–2012," *Social Justice Research* 30, no.1 (2017), 72–88, finding after the 2000 election, a growing pattern of strong correlation between states won by Republicans, with both lower levels of turnout, and higher levels of ineligible ex-felons in the voting-age population.
38. Manza and Uggen, *Ibid.,* 28–29.
39. 418 U.S. 24 (1974).
40. In the matter before the U.S. Supreme Court on a writ of *certiori* from the State of California, the California Supreme Court had overruled a prior felon disfranchisement case arising from a challenge to the California Constitution permitting the exclusion from the suffrage of those "convicted of bribery, perjury, forgery, mal-

feasance in office, or other high crimes." In the earlier case, *Otsuka v. Hite* (64 Cal. 2d 596, 414 P.2d 412, 51 Cal. Rptr. 284, (1966)), the California Supreme Court upheld the state constitution's felon disfranchisement clause, but construed it narrowly to apply to only those ex-felons guilty of offenses that could signal a propensity to commit election crimes. Unsure as to how to interpret the rule, local registrars applied it in widely varying ways – some disfranchised for almost all crimes, others for none, some made distinctions between rape and statutory rape, and others diverged on the question of whether to disfranchise for narcotics-related crimes or not. See, "The Need for Reform of Ex-Felon Disenfranchisement Laws," *Yale Law Journal* 83, no. 3 (1974), 580–601.

41. Justice Rehnquist's 1971 U.S. Senate confirmation hearing revealed his own past record as a vote suppressor for the Arizona Republican Party back in the early 1960s. See, Davidson, *et al., Ibid.,* 533–562.
42. Christopher Uggen, Ryan Larson, and Sarah Shannon, "6 Million Lost Voters: State-Level Estimates of Felony Disenfranchisement, 2016," The Sentencing Project, Washington, D.C., 2016, accessed June 21, 2019, https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6-million-lost-voters-state-level-estimates-felony-disenfranchisement-2016/.
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44. Lance deHaven-Smith, *The Battle for Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Piven, Minnite, and Groarke, *Ibid.*; Jeffrey Toobin, *Too Close to Call* (New York: Random House, 2002); U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Voting Irregularities in Florida During the 2000 Presidential Election,* Washington, D.C., 2001.
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48. Hasen, *Ibid.*
49. 553 U.S. 181 (2008).
50. Keith Gunner Bentele and Erin O'Brien, "Jim Crow 2.0? Why States Consider and Adopt Restrictive Voter Access Policies," *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (December 2013), 1088–1116; William D. Hicks, Seth C. McKee, Mitchell D. Sellers, and Daniel A. Smith, "A Principle or a Strategy? Voter Identification Laws and Partisan Competition in the American States," *Political Research Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (2015), 18–33; William D. Hicks, Seth C. McKee, and Daniel A. Smith, "The Determinants of State Legislator Support for Restrictive Voter ID Laws," *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (2016), 411–431.
51. 570 U.S. 2 (2013).
52. In July 2016, the full Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Texas' voter identification law discriminated against minorities. Similarly, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down North Carolina's voter identification law, concluding it was enacted with a racially discriminatory intent in violation of Constitutional and statutory prohibitions against intentional discrimination. At this writing, litigation continues in Texas; and in North Carolina, to bypass the judicial block, the Republican-dominated state legislature won voter approval to change the state's constitution in ways that would permit the adoption of more stringent voter identification requirements. The legislature then passed and sustained a gubernatorial veto of a voter identification law nearly identical to the one struck down by the Fourth Circuit.
53. Leadership Conference Education Fund, "The Great Poll Closure," Washington, D.C.: November 2016, 7.
54. See the *Huerena v. Reagan*, Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, filed by the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in the Superior Court of the State of Arizona (in and for the County of Maricopa), filed June 2, 2016. The case was settled on October 19, 2016, with Maricopa County election officials agreeing to develop a comprehensive Wait Time Reduction Plan for every primary and general election through 2020. Maricopa County restored the number of polling places to 724 for the 2016 General Election. See, Maricopa County Elections Division, "Past Polling Place Detail Report," General Election, November 11,

2016, accessed June 21, 2019, https://recorder.maricopa.gov/pollingplace/pastppdetailresults.aspx?view=precinct&election=GENERAL+ELECTION%2c+11%2f8%2f2016&ElectNo=1301&Type=other.

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Chapter 17

The Construction of Consent

David Harvey

How was neoliberalization accomplished, and by whom? The answer in countries such as Chile and Argentina in the 1970s was as simple as it was swift, brutal, and sure: a military coup backed by the traditional upper classes (as well as by the US government), followed by the fierce repression of all solidarities created within the labour and urban social movements which had so threatened their power. But the neoliberal revolution usually attributed to Thatcher and Reagan after 1979 had to be accomplished by democratic means. For a shift of this magnitude to occur required the prior construction of political consent across a sufficiently large spectrum of the population to win elections. What Gramsci calls 'common sense' (defined as 'the sense held in common') typically grounds consent. Common sense is constructed out of longstanding practices of cultural socialization often rooted deep in regional or national traditions. It is not the same as the 'good sense' that can be constructed out of critical engagement with the issues of the day. Common sense can, therefore, be profoundly misleading, obfuscating or disguising real problems under cultural prejudices.[1] Cultural and traditional values (such as belief in God and country or views on the position of women in society) and fears (of communists, immigrants, strangers, or 'others') can be mobilized to mask other realities. Political slogans can be invoked that mask specific strategies beneath vague rhetorical devices. The word 'freedom' resonates so widely within the common-sense understanding of Americans that it becomes 'a button that elites can press to open the door to the masses' to justify almost anything.[2] Thus could Bush retrospectively justify the Iraq war. Gramsci therefore concluded that political questions become 'insoluble' when 'disguised as cultural ones'.[3] In seeking to understand the construction of political consent, we must learn to extract political meanings from their cultural integuments.

So how, then, was sufficient popular consent generated to legitimize the neoliberal turn? The channels through which this was done were diverse. Powerful ideological influences circulated through the corporations, the media, and the numerous institutions that constitute civil society—such as the universities, schools, churches, and professional associations. The 'long march' of neoliberal ideas through these institutions that Hayek had envisaged back in 1947, the organization of think-tanks (with corporate backing and funding), the capture of certain segments of the media, and the conversion of many intellectuals to neoliberal ways of thinking, created a climate of opinion in support of neoliberalism as the exclusive guarantor of freedom. These movements were later consolidated through the capture of political parties and, ultimately, state power.

Appeals to traditions and cultural values bulked large in all of this. An open project around the restoration of economic power to a small elite would probably not gain much popular support. But a programmatic attempt to advance the cause of individual freedoms could appeal to a mass base and so disguise the drive to restore class power. Furthermore, once the state apparatus made the neoliberal turn it could use its powers of persuasion, cooptation,

bribery, and threat to maintain the climate of consent necessary to perpetuate its power. This was Thatcher's and Reagan's particular forte. . . .

How, then, did neoliberalism negotiate the turn to so comprehensively displace embedded liberalism? In some instances, the answer largely lies in the use of force (either military, as in Chile, or financial, as through the operations of the IMF in Mozambique or the Philippines). Coercion can produce a fatalistic, even abject, acceptance of the idea that there was and is, as Margaret Thatcher kept insisting, 'no alternative'. . . . it is at that level through the experience of daily life under capitalism in the 1970s that we begin to see how neoliberalism penetrated 'common-sense' understandings. The effect in many parts of the world has increasingly been to see it as a necessary, even wholly 'natural', way for the social order to be regulated.

Any political movement that holds individual freedoms to be sacrosanct is vulnerable to incorporation into the neoliberal fold. The worldwide political upheavals of 1968, for example, were strongly inflected with the desire for greater personal freedoms. This was certainly true for students, such as those animated by the Berkeley 'free speech' movement of the 1960s or who took to the streets in Paris, Berlin, and Bangkok and were so mercilessly shot down in Mexico City shortly before the 1968 Olympic Games. They demanded freedom from parental, educational, corporate, bureaucratic, and state constraints. But the '68 movement also had social justice as a primary political objective.

Values of individual freedom and social justice are not, however, necessarily compatible. Pursuit of social justice presupposes social solidarities and a willingness to submerge individual wants, needs, and desires in the cause of some more general struggle for, say, social equality or environmental justice. The objectives of social justice and individual freedom were uneasily fused in the movement of '68. The tension was most evident in the fraught relationship between the traditional left (organized labour and political parties espousing social solidarities) and the student movement desirous of individual liberties. The suspicion and hostility that separated these two fractions in France (e.g. the Communist Party and the student movement) during the events of 1968 is a case in point. While it is not impossible to bridge such differences, it is not hard to see how a wedge might be driven between them. Neoliberal rhetoric, with its foundational emphasis upon individual freedoms, has the power to split off libertarianism, identity politics, multiculturalism, and eventually narcissistic consumerism from the social forces ranged in pursuit of social justice through the conquest of state power. It has long proved extremely difficult within the US left, for example, to forge the collective discipline required for political action to achieve social justice without offending the desire of political actors for individual freedom and for full recognition and expression of particular identities. Neoliberalism did not create these distinctions, but it could easily exploit, if not foment, them.

In the early 1970s those seeking individual freedoms and social justice could make common cause in the face of what many saw as a common enemy. Powerful corporations in alliance with an interventionist state were seen to be running the world in individually oppressive and socially unjust ways. The Vietnam War was the most obvious catalyst for discontent, but the destructive activities of corporations and the state in relation to the environment, the push towards mindless consumerism, the failure to address social issues and respond adequately to diversity, as well as intense restrictions on individual possibilities and personal behaviours by state-mandated and 'traditional' controls were also widely resented. Civil rights were an issue, and questions of sexuality and of reproductive rights were very much in play. For almost everyone involved in the movement of '68, the intrusive state was the enemy and it had to be reformed. And on that, the neoliberals could easily agree. But capitalist corporations, business, and the market system were also seen as primary

enemies requiring redress if not revolutionary transformation: hence the threat to capitalist class power. By capturing ideals of individual freedom and turning them against the interventionist and regulatory practices of the state, capitalist class interests could hope to protect and even restore their position. Neoliberalism was well suited to this ideological task. But it had to be backed up by a practical strategy that emphasized the liberty of consumer choice, not only with respect to particular products but also with respect to lifestyles, modes of expression, and a wide range of cultural practices. Neoliberalism required both politically and economically the construction of a neoliberal market-based populist culture of differentiated consumerism and individual libertarianism. As such it proved more than a little compatible with that impulse called 'postmodernism' which had long been lurking in the wings but could now emerge full-blown as both a cultural and an intellectual dominant. This was the challenge that corporations and class elites set out to finesse in the 1980s.

None of this was very clear at the time. Left movements failed to recognize or confront, let alone transcend, the inherent tension between the quest for individual freedoms and social justice. But the intuitive problem was, I suspect, clear enough to many in the upper class, even to those who had never read Hayek or even heard of neoliberal theory. Let me illustrate this idea by comparing the neoliberal turns in the US and Britain in the troubled years of the 1970s.

In the US case I begin with a confidential memo sent by Lewis Powell to the US Chamber of Commerce in August 1971. Powell, about to be elevated to the Supreme Court by Richard Nixon, argued that criticism of and opposition to the US free enterprise system had gone too far and that 'the time had come—indeed it is long overdue—for the wisdom, ingenuity and resources of American business to be marshaled against those who would destroy it'. Powell argued that individual action was insufficient. 'Strength', he wrote, 'lies in organization, in careful long-range planning and implementation, in consistency of action over an indefinite period of years, in the scale of financing available only through joint effort, and in the political power available only through united action and national organizations'. The National Chamber of Commerce, he argued, should lead an assault upon the major institutions—universities, schools, the media, publishing, the courts—in order to change how individuals think 'about the corporation, the law, culture, and the individual'. US businesses did not lack resources for such an effort, particularly when pooled.[4]

How directly influential this appeal to engage in class war was, is hard to tell. But we do know that the American Chamber of Commerce subsequently expanded its base from around 60,000 firms in 1972 to over a quarter of a million ten years later. Jointly with the National Association of Manufacturers (which moved to Washington in 1972) it amassed an immense campaign chest to lobby Congress and engage in research. The Business Roundtable, an organization of CEOs 'committed to the aggressive pursuit of political power for the corporation', was founded in 1972 and thereafter became the centrepiece of collective pro-business action. The corporations involved accounted for 'about one half of the GNP of the United States' during the 1970s, and they spent close to $900 million annually (a huge amount at that time) on political matters. Think-tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation, the Hoover Institute, the Center for the Study of American Business, and the American Enterprise Institute, were formed with corporate backing both to polemicize and, when necessary, as in the case of the National Bureau of Economic Research, to construct serious technical and empirical studies and political-philosophical arguments broadly in support of neoliberal policies. Nearly half the financing for the highly respected NBER came from the leading companies in the Fortune 500 list. Closely integrated with the academic community, the NBER was to have a very significant impact on thinking in the economics departments and business schools of the major research universities. With abundant finance furnished by

wealthy individuals (such as the brewer Joseph Coors, who later became a member of Reagan's 'kitchen cabinet') and their foundations (for example Olin, Scaife, Smith Richardson, Pew Charitable Trust), a flood of tracts and books, with Nozick's *Anarchy State and Utopia* perhaps the most widely read and appreciated, emerged espousing neoliberal values. A TV version of Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose* was funded with a grant from Scaife in 1977. 'Business was', Blyth concludes, 'learning to spend as a class'.[5]

In singling out the universities for particular attention, Powell pointed up an opportunity as well as an issue, for these were indeed centres of anti-corporate and anti-state sentiment (the students at Santa Barbara had burned down the Bank of America building there and ceremonially buried a car in the sands). But many students were (and still are) affluent and privileged, or at least middle class, and in the US the values of individual freedom have long been celebrated (in music and popular culture) as primary. Neoliberal themes could here find fertile ground for propagation. Powell did not argue for extending state power. But business should 'assiduously cultivate' the state and when necessary use it 'aggressively and with determination'.[6] But exactly how was state power to be deployed to reshape commonsense understandings?

One line of response to the double crisis of capital accumulation and class power arose in the trenches of the 1970s. The New York City fiscal crisis was an iconic case. Capitalist restructuring and deindustrialization had for several years been eroding the economic base of the city, and rapid suburbanization had left much of the central city impoverished. The result was explosive social unrest on the part of marginalized populations during the 1960s, defining what came to be known as 'the urban crisis' (similar problems emerged in many US cities). The expansion of public employment and public provision—facilitated in part by generous federal funding—was seen as the solution. But, faced with fiscal difficulties, President Nixon simply declared the urban crisis over in the early 1970s. While this was news to many city dwellers, it signaled diminished federal aid. As the recession gathered pace the gap between revenues and outlays in the New York City budget (already large because of profligate borrowing over many years) increased. At first financial institutions were prepared to bridge the gap, but in 1975 a powerful cabal of investment bankers (led by Walter Wriston of Citibank) refused to roll over the debt and pushed the city into technical bankruptcy. The bail-out that followed entailed the construction of new institutions that took over the management of the city budget. They had first claim on city tax revenues in order to first pay off bondholders: whatever was left went for essential services. The effect was to curb the aspirations of the city's powerful municipal unions to implement wage freezes and cutbacks in public employment and social provision (education, public health, transport services), and to impose user fees (tuition was introduced into the CUNY university system for the first time). The final indignity was the requirement that municipal unions should invest their pension funds in city bonds. Unions then either moderated their demands or faced the prospect of losing their pension funds through city bankruptcy.[7]

This amounted to a coup by the financial institutions against the democratically elected government of New York City, and it was every bit as effective as the military coup that had earlier occurred in Chile. Wealth was redistributed to the upper classes in the midst of a fiscal crisis. The New York crisis was, Zevin argues, symptomatic of 'an emerging strategy of disinflation coupled with a regressive redistribution of income, wealth and power'. It was 'an early, perhaps decisive battle in a new war', the purpose of which was 'to show others that what is happening to New York could and in some cases will happen to them'.[8]

Whether everyone involved in negotiating this fiscal compromise understood it as a strategy to restore class power is an open question. The need to maintain fiscal discipline is a matter of concern in its own right and does not, like monetarism more generally, necessarily

entail regressive distributions. It is unlikely, for example, that Felix Rohatyn, merchant banker who brokered the deal between the city, the state, and the financial institutions, had the restoration of class power in mind. The only way he could 'save' the city was by satisfying the investment bankers while diminishing the standard of living of most New Yorkers. But the restoration of class power was certainly what investment bankers like Walter Wriston had in mind. He had, after all, equated all forms of government intervention in the US and Britain with communism. And it was almost certainly the aim of Ford's Secretary of the Treasury William Simon (later to become head of the ultra-conservative Olin Foundation). Watching the progress of events in Chile with approval, he strongly advised President Ford to refuse aid to the city ('Ford to City: Drop Dead' ran the headline in the *New York Daily News*). The terms of any bail-out, he said, should be 'so punitive, the overall experience so painful, that no city, no political subdivision would ever be tempted to go down the same road'.[9]

While resistance to the austerity measures was widespread, it could only, according to Freeman, slow 'the counterrevolution from above, it could not stop it. Within a few years, many of the historic achievements of working-class New York were undone'. Much of the social infrastructure of the city was diminished and the physical infrastructure (for example the subway system) deteriorated markedly for lack of investment or even maintenance. Daily life in New York 'became grueling and the civic atmosphere turned mean'. The city government, the municipal labour movement, and working-class New Yorkers were effectively stripped 'of much of the power they had accumulated over the previous three decades'.[10] Demoralized, working-class New Yorkers reluctantly assented to the new realities.

But the New York investment bankers did not walk away from the city. They seized the opportunity to restructure it in ways that suited their agenda. The creation of a 'good business climate' was a priority. This meant using public resources to build appropriate infrastructures for business (particularly in telecommunications) coupled with subsidies and tax incentives for capitalist enterprises. Corporate welfare substituted for people welfare. The city's elite institutions were mobilized to sell the image of the city as a cultural centre and tourist destination (inventing the famous logo 'I Love New York'). The ruling elites moved, often fractiously, to support the opening up of the cultural field to all manner of diverse cosmopolitan currents. The narcissistic exploitation of self, sexuality, and identity became the leitmotif of bourgeois urban culture. Artistic freedom and artistic license, promoted by the city's powerful cultural institutions, led, in effect, to the neoliberaliation of culture. 'Delirious New York' (to use Rem Koolhaas's memorable phrase) erased the collective memory of democratic New York.[11] The city's elites acceded, though not without a struggle, to the demand for lifestyle diversification (including those attached to sexual preference and gender) and increasing consumer niche choices (in areas such as cultural production). New York became the epicentre of postmodern cultural and intellectual experimentation. Mean bankers reconstructed the city economy around financial activities, ancillary services such as legal services and the media (much revived by the financialization then occurring), and diversified consumerism (gentrification and neighbourhood 'restoration' playing a prominent and profitable role). City government was more and more construed as an entrepreneurial rather than a social democratic or even managerial entity. Inter-urban competition for investment capital transformed government into urban governance through public-private partnerships. City business was increasingly conducted behind closed doors, and the democratic and representational content of local governance diminished.[12]

Working-class and ethnic-immigrant New York was thrust back into the shadows, to be ravaged by racism and a crack cocaine epidemic of epic proportions in the 1980s that left many young people either dead, incarcerated, or homeless, only to be bludgeoned again by

the AIDS epidemic that carried over into the 1990s. Redistribution through criminal violence became one of the few serious options for the poor, and the authorities responded by criminalizing whole communities of impoverished and marginalized populations. The victims were blamed, and Giuliani was to claim fame by taking revenge on behalf of an increasingly affluent Manhattan bourgeoisie tired of having to confront the effects of such devastation on their own doorsteps.

The management of the New York fiscal crisis pioneered the way for neoliberal practices both domestically under Reagan and internationally through the IMF in the 1980s. It established the principle that in the event of a conflict between the integrity of financial institutions and bondholders' returns, on the one hand, and the well-being of the citizens on the other, the former was to be privileged. It emphasized that the role of government was to create a good business climate rather than look to the needs and well-being of the population at large. The politics of the Reagan administration of the 1980s, Tabb concludes, became 'merely the New York scenario' of the 1970s 'writ large'.[13]

The translation of these local conclusions of the mid–1970s to the national level was fast-moving. Thomas Edsall (a journalist who covered Washington affairs for many years) published a prescient account in 1985:

> During the 1970s, business refined its ability to act as a class, submerging competitive instincts in favour of joint, cooperative action in the legislative arena. Rather than individual companies seeking only special favours . . . the dominant theme in the political strategy of business became a shared interest in the defeat of bills such as consumer protection and labour law reform, and in the enactment of favourable tax, regulatory and antitrust legislation.[14]

In order to realize this goal, businesses needed a political class instrument and a popular base. They therefore actively sought to capture the Republican Party as their own instrument. The formation of powerful political action committees to procure, as the old adage had it, 'the best government that money could buy' was an important step. The supposedly 'progressive' campaign finance laws of 1971 in effect legalized the financial corruption of politics. A crucial set of Supreme Court decisions began in 1976 when it was first established that the right of a corporation to make unlimited money contributions to political parties and political action committees was protected under the First Amendment guaranteeing the rights of individuals (in this instance corporations) to freedom of speech.[15] Political action committees (PACs) could thereafter ensure the financial domination of both political parties by corporate, moneyed, and professional association interests. Corporate PACs, which numbered eighty-nine in 1974, had burgeoned to 1,467 by 1982. While these were willing to fund powerful incumbents of both parties provided their interests were served, they also systematically leaned towards supporting rightwing challengers in the late 1970s. Reagan (then Governor of California) and William Simon (whom we have already encountered) went out of their way to urge the PACs to direct their efforts towards funding Republican candidates with right-wing sympathies.[16] The $5,000 limit on each PAC's contribution to any one individual forced PACs from different corporations and industries to work together, and that meant building alliances based on class rather than particular interests.

The willingness of the Republican Party to become the representative of 'its dominant class constituency' during this period contrasted, Edsall notes, with the 'ideologically ambivalent' attitude of the Democrats which grew out of 'the fact that its ties to various groups in society are diffuse, and none of these groups—women, blacks, labour, the elderly, hispanics, urban political organizations—stands clearly larger than the others'. The

dependency of Democrats, furthermore, on 'big money' contributions rendered many of them highly vulnerable to direct influence from business interests.[17] While the Democratic Party had a popular base, it could not easily pursue an anti-capitalist or anti-corporate political line without totally severing its connections with powerful financial interests.

The Republican Party needed, however, a solid electoral base if it was to colonize power effectively. It was around this time that Republicans sought an alliance with the Christian right. The latter had not been politically active in the past, but the foundation of Jerry Falwell's 'moral majority' as a political movement in 1978 changed all of that. The Republican Party now had its Christian base. It also appealed to the cultural nationalism of the white working classes and their besieged sense of moral righteousness (besieged because this class lived under conditions of chronic economic insecurity and felt excluded from many of the benefits that were being distributed through affirmative action and other state programmes). This political base could be mobilized through the positives of religion and cultural nationalism and negatively through coded, if not blatant, racism, homophobia, and antifeminism. The problem was not capitalism and the neoliberalization of culture, but the 'liberals' who had used excessive state power to provide for special groups (blacks, women, environmentalists, etc.). A well-funded movement of neoconservative intellectuals (gathered around Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz and the journal *Commentary*), espousing morality and traditional values, gave credence to these theses. Supporting the neoliberal turn economically but not culturally, they excoriated the interventionist excesses of a so-called 'liberal elite'—thus greatly muddying what the term 'liberal' might mean. The effect was to divert attention from capitalism and corporate power as in any way having anything to do with either the economic or the cultural problems that unbridled commercialism and individualism were creating.

From then on the unholy alliance between big business and conservative Christians backed by the neoconservatives steadily consolidated, eventually eradicating all liberal elements (significant and influential in the 1960s) from the Republican Party, particularly after 1990, and turning it into the relatively homogeneous right-wing electoral force of present times.[18] Not for the first, nor, it is to be feared, for the last time in history has a social group been persuaded to vote against its material, economic, and class interests for cultural, nationalist, and religious reasons. In some cases, however, it is probably more appropriate to replace the word 'persuaded' with 'elected', since there is abundant evidence that the evangelical Christians (no more than 20 percent of the population) who make up the core of the 'moral majority' eagerly embraced the alliance with big business and the Republican Party as a means to further promote their evangelical and moral agenda. This was certainly the case with the shadowy and secretive organization of Christian conservatives that constituted the Council for National Policy, founded in 1981, 'to strategize how to turn the country to the right'.[19]

The Democratic Party, on the other hand, was fundamentally driven by the need to placate, if not succour, corporate and financial interests while at the same time making some gestures towards improving the material conditions of life for its popular base. During the Clinton presidency it ended up choosing the former over the latter and therefore fell directly into the neoliberal fold of policy prescription and implementation (as, for example, in the reform of welfare).[20] But, as in the case of Felix Rohatyn, it is doubtful if this was Clinton's agenda from the very beginning. Faced with the need to overcome a huge deficit and spark economic growth, his only feasible economic path was deficit reduction to achieve low interest rates. That meant either substantially higher taxation (which amounted to electoral suicide) or cutbacks in the budget. Going for the latter meant, as Yergin and Stanislaw put it, 'betraying their traditional constituencies in order to pamper the rich' or, as Joseph Stiglitz,

once chair of Clinton's Council of Economic Advisors, later confessed, 'we did manage to tighten the belts of the poor as we loosened those on the rich'.[21] Social policy was in effect put in the care of the Wall Street bondholders (much as had happened in New York City earlier), with predictable consequences.

The political structure that emerged was quite simple. The Republican Party could mobilize massive financial resources and mobilize its popular base to vote against its material interests on cultural/religious grounds while the Democratic Party could not afford to attend to the material needs (for example for a national health-care system) of its traditional popular base for fear of offending capitalist class interests. Given the asymmetry, the political hegemony of the Republican Party became more sure.

Reagan's election in 1980 was only the first step in the long process of consolidating the political shift necessary to support Volcker's turn to monetarism and the prioritization of the fight against inflation. Reagan's policies, Edsall noted at the time, centred on 'an across the board drive to reduce the scope and content of federal regulation of industry, the environment, the workplace, health care, and the relationship between buyer and seller'. Budget cuts and deregulation and 'the appointment of antiregulatory, industry-oriented agency personnel' to key positions were the main means.[22]

The National Labour Relations Board, established to regulate capital-labour relations in the workplace in the 1930s, was converted by Reagan's appointments into a vehicle for attacking and regulating the rights of labour at the very moment when business was being deregulated.[23] It took less than six months in 1983 to reverse nearly 40 percent the decisions made during the 1970s that had been, in the view of business, too favourable to labour. Reagan construed all regulation (except of labour) as bad. The Office of Management and Budget was mandated to do thorough cost-benefit analyses of all regulatory proposals (past and present). If it could not be shown that the benefits of regulation clearly exceeded the costs then the regulations should be scrapped. To top it all, elaborate revisions of the tax code—mainly depreciation on investments—allowed many corporations to get away without paying any taxes at all, while the reduction of the top tax rate for individuals from 78 to 28 per cent obviously reflected the intent to restore class power. Worst of all, public assets were freely passed over into the private domain. Many of the key breakthroughs in pharmaceutical research, for example, had been funded by the National Institute of Health in collaboration with the drug companies. But in 1978 the companies were allowed to take all the benefits of patent rights without returning anything to the state, assuring the industry of high and highly subsidized profits ever after.[24]

But all of this required that labour and labour organization be brought to heel to conform to the new social order. If New York pioneered this by disciplining powerful municipal unions in 1975–77, Reagan followed at the national level by bringing down the air traffic controllers in 1981 and making it clear to the trade unions that they were unwelcome as participants in the inner councils of government. The uneasy social compact that had ruled between corporate and union power during the 1960s was over. With unemployment surging to 10 per cent in the mid–1980s, the moment was propitious to attack all forms of organized labour and to cut back on its privileges as well as its power. Transfer of industrial activity from the unionized north-east and midwest to the non-unionized and 'right-to-work' states of the south, if not beyond to Mexico and South-East Asia, became standard practice (subsidized by favourable taxation for new investment and aided by the shift in emphasis from production to finance as the centrepiece of power of capitalist class power). Deindustrialization of formerly unionized core industrial regions (the so-called 'rust belt') disempowered labour. Corporations could threaten plant closures, and risk and usually win strikes when necessary (for example in the coal industry).

But here too it was not merely the use of the big stick that mattered, for there were a number of carrots that could be offered to labourers as individuals to break with collective action. The unions' rigid rules and bureaucratic structures made them vulnerable to attack. The lack of flexibility was often as much a disadvantage for individual labourers as it was for capital. The virtuous claims for flexible specialization in labour processes and for flexitime arrangements could become part of the neoliberal rhetoric that could be persuasive to individual labourers, particularly those who had been excluded from the monopoly benefits that strong unionization sometimes conferred. Greater freedom and liberty of action in the labour market could be touted as a virtue for capital and labour alike, and here, too, it was not hard to integrate neoliberal values into the 'common sense' of much of the workforce. How this active potentiality was converted into a highly exploitative system of flexible accumulation (all the benefits accruing from increasing in labour allocations in both space and time go to capital) is key to explaining why real wages, except for a brief period during the 1990s, stagnated or fell and benefits diminished. Neoliberal theory conveniently holds that unemployment is always voluntary. Labour, the argument goes, has a 'reserve price' below which it prefers not to work. Unemployment arises because the reserve price of labour is too high. Since that reserve price is partly set by welfare payments (and stories of 'welfare queens' driving Cadillacs abounded) then it stands to reason that the neoliberal reform carried out by Clinton of 'welfare as we know it' must be a crucial step towards the reduction of unemployment.

All of this demanded some rationale, and to this end the war of ideas did play an important role. The economic ideas marshaled in support of the neoliberal turn amounted, Blyth suggests, to a complex fusion of monetarism (Friedman), rational expectations (Robert Lucas), public choice (James Buchanan, and Gordon Tullock), and the less respectable but but by no means uninfluential 'supply-side' ideas of Arthur Lauffer, who went so far as to suggest that the incentive effects of tax cuts would so increase economic activity as to automatically increase tax revenues (Reagan was enamoured of this idea). The more acceptable commonality to these arguments was that government intervention was the problem rather than the solution, and that 'a stable monetary policy, plus radical tax cuts in the top brackets, would produce a healthier economy' by getting the incentives for entrepreneurial activity aligned correctly.[25] The business press, with the *Wall Street Journal* very much in the lead, took up these ideas, becoming an open advocate for neoliberalization as the necessary solution to all economic ills. Popular currency was given to these ideas by prolific writers such as George Gilder (supported by think-tank funds), and the business schools that arose in prestigious universities such as Stanford and Harvard, generously funded by corporations and foundations, became centres of neoliberal orthodoxy from the very moment they opened. Charting the spread of ideas is always difficult, but by 1990 or so most economics departments in the major research universities as well as the business schools were dominated by neoliberal modes of thought. The importance of this should not be underestimated. The US research universities were and are training grounds for many foreigners who take what they learn back to their countries of origin—the key figures in Chile's and Mexico's adaptations to neoliberalism were US-trained economists for example—as well as into international institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the UN.

The conclusion is, I think, clear. 'During the 1970s, the political wing of the nation's corporate sector', writes Edsall, 'staged one of the most remarkable campaigns in the pursuit of power in recent history'. By the early 1980s it 'had gained a level of influence and approaching the boom days of the 1920s'.[26] And by the year 2000 it had used that leverage to restore its share of the national wealth and income to levels also not seen since the 1920s.

Notes

1. A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971), 321–343.
2. J. Rapley, *Globalization and Inequality: Neoliberalism's Downward Spiral* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2004), 55.
3. Gramsci 149.
4. J. Court, *Corporateering: How Corporate Power Steals Your Personal Freedom* (N.Y.: J. P. Tarcher/Putnam, 2003), 33–8.
5. M. Blyth, *Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), 155. The information in the preceeding paragraph comes from chs. 5 and 6 of Blyth's account, supported by T. Edsall, *The New Politics of Inequality* (N.Y.: Norton, 1985), chs. 2 and 3.
6. Court, 34.
7. W. Tabb, *The Long Default: New York City and the Urban Fiscal Crisis* (N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 1982); J. Freeman, *Working Class New York: Life and Labor Since World War II* (N.Y.: New Press, 2001).
8. R. Zevin, 'New York City Crisis: First Act in a New Age of Reaction' in R. Alcalay and D. Mermelstein (eds.), *The Fiscal Crisis of American Cities: Essays on the Political Economy of Urban America with Special Reference to New York* (N.Y.: Vintage Books, 1977), 11–29.
9. Tabb, 28. For Walter Wriston see T. Frank, *One Market Under God: Extreme Capitalism, Market Populism and the End of Economic Democracy* (N.Y.: Doubleday, 2000), 53–6.
10. Freeman.
11. R. Koolhaas, *Delirious New York* (N.Y.: Monacelli Press, 1994); M. Greenberg, 'The Limits of Branding: The World Trade Center, Fiscal Crisis and the Marketing of Recovery,' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research,* 27 (2003), 386–416.
12. Tabb, On the subsequent 'selling' of New York see Greenberg; on urban entrepreneurialism more generally see D. Harvey, 'From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation of Urban Governance in Late Capitalism', in id., *Spaces of Capital* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), ch. 16.
13. Tabb, 15.
14. Edsall, 128.
15. Court, 29–31, lists all the relevant legal decisions of the 1970s.
16. The accounts of Edsall, followed by Blyth, are compelling.
17. Edsall, 235.
18. T. Frank, *What's the Matter with Kansas: How Conservatives Won the Hearts of America* (N.Y.: Metropolitan Books, 2004).
19. D. Kirkpatrick, 'Club of the Most Powerful Gathers in Strictest Privacy,' *New York Times.* (28 Aug. 2004): A10.
20. See J. Stiglitz, *The Roaring Nineties* (N.Y.: Norton, 2003).
21. D. Yergin and J. Stanislaw, *Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 337; Stiglitz, 108.
22. Edsall, 217.
23. Again, the account here rests heavily on Blyth, and Edsall.
24. M. Angell, *The Truth About the Drug Companies: How They Deceive Us and What To Do About It* (N.Y.: Random House, 2004).
25. M. Blyth. See also Frank, *One Market Under God,* particularly on the role of Gilder.
26. Edsall, 107.

Chapter 18

Pacification and Police

A Critique of the Police Militarization Thesis

Christopher McMichael

The police militarization thesis

The concept of police militarization has gained traction through spectacular acts of violence, such as in the draconian police responses to protests associated with the Occupy movement in 2011 and the 2014 urban revolt sparked by the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Events in Ferguson inspired a wave of media coverage, which claimed that American cities are increasingly being treated as warzones, with accompanying pictures of camouflaged police threatening protesters juxtaposed alongside military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (Mashable 2014). Following the Ferguson rebellion, calls to 'demilitarize' the police by liberal and conservative politicians, journalists, academics, policy analysts, civil liberty groups, and activists gained national attention, with even the US Senate holding hearings on the issue.

A sample of some of the depictions of police militarization gives a sense of the diverse arrays of political perspectives which have converged on this idea. From voices within the leftist and alternative media, we read about how police departments have used government grants to 'stockpile combat gear' (DemocracyNow 2011), and 'been mobilized into a war' (Bruce 2013) which fails to distinguish between dangerous criminals and the public they are supposed to defend, and the incorporation of technologies designed for overseas combat into 'domestic policing' (Zlutnick 2013). From within mainstream liberalism, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) produced an extensive report called *War Comes Home,* which concluded with suggestions for more restrained policing honouring the 'mission to protect and serve rather than to wage war' (ACLU 2014: 45). Norm Stamper (2011), the former police chief of Seattle, has expressed regret for overseeing a violent clampdown during the 1999 Anti-World Trade Organization protests by warning of the emergence of an 'abusive, militaristic force – not just during demonstrations but every day, in neighbourhoods across the country'.

Strikingly, and little commented on by liberal or leftist outlets, some of the most vocal proponents of the 'militarization' thesis (at least within the context of the United States) have been from the Libertarian Right. By far the most influential advocate of the militarization doctrine is Radley Balko, a former writer and analyst for libertarian institutions *Reason Magazine* and the Cato Institute, the latter of which has intimate ties with the powerful Koch Brothers, who have also increasingly become concerned with police reform. Balko, currently of the *Huffington Post,* is a prolific and outspoken journalist, who has written countless media articles and policy reports and two books on the subject: *Overkill: The Rise of Paramilitary Police Raids in America* (Balko 2006) and the more recent *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces* (Balko 2013a). Balko (2006) maintains that domestic law enforcement has become dangerously invasive: 'Americans have long maintained that a man's

home is his castle and that he has the right to defend it from unlawful intruders. Unfortunately, that right may be disappearing' (p. iv). His main contention is that such tactics have encouraged a dangerous *blurring* between the police and military, in which the police work of protecting public safety is confused with the military work of seeking and destroying enemies (Balko 2006: 15). Although his work is often cited in progressive or radical publications, Balko's politics are squarely on the right: getting his start with Fox News, and then working long stints for Republican Party aligned think tanks, calling for the privatization of social welfare and prisons and, of course, defending the public influence of the Koch Brothers (Ames & Levine 2013).

Police militarization has become a political campaign issue, with Rand Paul (2014) writing an op-ed for *Time Magazine,* blaming the phenomenon on big government. In the aftermath of Ferguson, the US Senate, including Paul as one of the outspoken critics of 'police militarization' held a hearing on government programmes that facilitate the transfer of military technology to local police agencies. While some Senate members engaged in apologetics, usually in the name of necessity and security, Democrats and Republicans shared a general sentiment that the primary problem with the 'militarization of police' was in potentially threatening the integrity and legitimacy of domestic policing. This point about legitimacy is crucial in understanding the increased scrutiny of police militarization, as one of the central concerns is not necessarily the means or even deployment of militarized violence, but how this 'police militarization' reduces and weakens the legitimacy of the police power.

Despite the different political orientations which converge on the idea of militarization, it is notable how they all rely on a particular narrative about the nostalgic image of the 'bobby on the beat' or 'Officer Friendly' being replaced by camouflage wearing brutes. Such imagery suggests that militarization is a problem because of its excessiveness (doors kicked in, armoured vehicles on the streets, officers faces hidden behind threatening helmets) – the implication being that more 'ordinary forms' of policing are warranted as long as it does not become excessive (Napper & Kaba 2014). But what is often absent is that the 'ordinary' history of modern police institutions is itself a history of state repression, economic exploitation and structural racism. But even more importantly, police power's intimate links with military power is in no way new or aberrational. As this article will stress, war and policing continually overlap and intertwine. This crucial relationship is often downplayed or completely omitted within much of the militarization literature. For example, much of the coverage of Ferguson focused on the newness of Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Teams and no-knock warrants, frequently neglecting how these have historically been used against people of colour – 'for blacks, the war on terror hasn't come home. It's always been here' (Napper & Kaba 2014).

The constant reiteration of a narrative in which the norms of policing are being superseded by aggressive new tactics and technologies rests on the assumption that there is a politically neutral and sociologically unbiased ideal of police which must be returned too. This is obvious in the case of some commentary: While focusing on the evils of the state, right libertarian commentaries avoid the central role of police power and violence in the fabrication of capitalist social relations – a gymnastics to be expected of a political ideology which is based on critiquing state power while promoting unrestricted power for capital and private property (social relations that have historically been forged and protected by police power). But even more centrist liberal positions criticize excessiveness while nonetheless accepting the police as a fundamentally beneficent institution – such as the ACLU (2014) report which suggests that the problem with militarization is that it distracts the police from their proper job. Even

many radicals have problematically accepted the police mandate as one of 'protecting and serving'; hence, the institution itself must be extricated from the bad elements of violence and abuse.

Police, war and liberal order

Marxist and anarchist thinkers have consistently argued that the police are a repressive institution, not just when they are overtly violent but through the general work of protecting dominant social and economic relations, and preserving the authority of the state and market through a combination of force, administration and mobilizing ideology to garner public consent (Center for Research on Criminal Justice 1975). It is therefore not sufficient to only see police as repressive, for police power is also a productive power – its *sin qua non* being that of fabricating good order and security, which are most often euphemisms for the protection of private property, commodity circulation and accumulation. Thinking through the problem of police power is not only a thinking through the problem of violent repression (which is the primary angle of the militarization thesis) – it is at once coming up against the power of police to build a social order of capitalist social relations through both repressive measures – the iron fist – and campaigns of winning 'hearts and minds', the velvet glove. Put more bluntly, even if we take the militarization out of the police, we are still left with the police mandate of fabricating order.

But what is it at stake is not just the definition of police, but of war. The liberal definition of war as a confrontation between formally opposed states both ignores 'the transnational nature of a great deal of warfare' and 'obscure[s] the structural and systematic violence through which liberal order has been constituted' (Neocleous 2010: 9). This ideological blurring goes back to European imperialism where, from the 16th century onwards, complex legal and philosophical arguments were used to present wars of colonial expansion as police actions to ensure peace and security – often referred to as 'small wars'. The military campaigns at the forefront of conquest and violent accumulation were philosophically and ideologically rationalized as necessary to pacify 'savage' populations and to liberate their bodies and resources for the benefit of civilization (Neocleous 2010: 14). A key point of liberal thought is conceptualizing the military as an institution solely for foreign policy and the 'over there' and the police as a domestic institution only deployed 'here' for law enforcement and keeping the peace. Through this logic, the liberal state set itself up as different from feudal power and later what would become known as the totalitarian or 'police state', in which warfare against citizens is said to be unbound. Therefore, the notion that police powers and war powers come from different logics and mandates is a relatively recent notion that largely emerges out of liberal doctrines on state power (i.e. separation of powers and rule of law), which of course also merged with a nascent capitalist modernity (which was contingent on mass state and private violence against the indigenous, slaves and poor people). What is deliberately obscured is how civil society under capitalism is already at war. As described by Marx in Volume One of *Capital* the history of liberalism is also of the 'logic of war, exercised in a permanent fashion against rebellious slaves, antagonistic Indians, wayward workers, and criminals with something unsocial in mind' (Neocleous 2010: 15). Two centuries later, we see 'semi-permanent wars against the enemy within and without – such as the war on drugs and the war on terror' (Neocleous 2010: 16). The dominant thrust of the liberal tradition is thus to simplify the complexity of political power into dichotomies with policing and war treated as separate endeavours, represented by different institutions and practised within separate territories. However, even left theorists across different disciplines have accepted these distinctions, leading to work which focuses on the 'overlaps' and

'blurring' between the police and military, rather than on war and police as 'processes working in conjunction as state power' (Neocleous 2013: 587). From this standpoint, the question is not then about how the police resemble militaries, but rather the role that the police play in the liberal war for peace and pacification. In order to understand this, we first need to understand the liberal arguments, which are at the centre of the police militarization concept.

As Kristian Williams (2007) observes the term militarization is often chosen 'more for its connotations than for any literal meaning' with much media coverage and analysis focusing exclusively on external signifiers such as overt violence and 'equipment, uniforms and weaponry' (p. 197). By contrast, the body of academic literature on the topic has suggested that militarization is a much broader and more insidious process, which mutates and transforms the ideology, operational behaviour and logistics of the police (Williams 2007: 197). There are three central, overlapping themes which stand out within the literature: police and military blurring, separation of mandates and operating territories, and distinctions between liberal states and 'police states'.

Militarization is . . . treated as a process in which the use of military hardware and tactics are adopted for criminal 'law enforcement' (Kraska and Kappeler 1997: 1). Critics argue that these tactical responses are indicative of a conceptual shift through which the metaphor of the war on crime turns domestic territory into a realm of combat, in which internal populations are the potential enemy (Balko 2006: 15; Marks & Wood 2010: 312). For Balko (2013b), the strict demarcation between war and policing is central to ensure that 'militarization' is kept 'in its intended context – protecting Americans by fighting overseas'. The legitimate role of the police is to uphold law and investigate crime and uphold the law, with minimal resort to force, while the militaries is to hunt and kill aboard (Weiss 2011: 401).

The militarization thesis is also haunted by the spectre of the police state in both the past and the future. On one hand, this is accompanied by nostalgic descriptions of 'real' policing – as Balko (2013b) rhetorically asks,

> How did we go from a system in which laws were enforced by the citizens . . . to one in which order is preserved by armed governments agents too often conditioned to see streets and neighbourhoods as battlefields and the citizens they serve as enemy?

But the extent to which militarization is presented as a novel contemporary phenomenon may reveal nothing so much as the extent to which police institutions have been ideologically successful in naturalizing their role in society. As a result new developments in tactics and equipment come to be presented as a disturbing deviation from the norm. However, this focus on internal signifiers of violence blurs how even 'community' and public-orientated policing can work in accord with overt aggression. To the extent that the militarization thesis seems more concerned with excess and spectacle, it misses the routine repression of 'officer friendly' as he or she walks the beat, patrols the neighbourhood, and visits schools to build public relations and win popular support. In the United States, one police response to the social crisis of the 1960s was to experiment with 'softer' law enforcement to pre-empt social response which drew upon 'hearts and minds' tactics, originating in military counter-insurgency (Williams 2012: 91). 'Militarization' is therefore just one of the key changes in recent US policing, working in tandem with other forms of softer power.

This faith in legal protection is counterpoised with the threat that seems to lurk in the background of the militarization discourse: the 'police state'. Underlying this is the idea that a 'blurring' between the military and the police is a hallmark of the despotic state, and in particular the various Fascist and Stalinist states of the last century, with their vast coercive

apparatuses. What this implies is that liberal democracies have a categorically different kind of police and criminal justice system: one that is intended to protect the interests and property of its ('law abiding') citizens rather than internal warfare. Such an ideology holds that while 'conquest and bloodshed' may have been central to the genesis of capitalist modernity, contemporary liberal states are marked by fundamentally peaceful social relations (Trocchi 2011: 305). In its most media-driven form, the militarization thesis, as it relies on the assumption of separation of police power and war power, therefore, generally regards police as a fundamentally benign institution in society, which provides a central public service and which needs to be steered away from the dangerous pull of militarism.

Along with the underlying assumption that the police uphold a universal public good, the concept of police militarization makes the a priori assumption that foreign warfare does not, or at least should not, have any bearing on the 'everyday' functions of the police. Many liberal thinkers have viewed warfare as both the last resort of state power and as antithetical to capitalism because it interrupts production and consumption (Kaldor 1982: 264). In fact, 'the notion of militarism is itself capitalist. It emerges with the distinction between warriors and entrepreneurs in place of the feudal lord' (Kaldor 1982). But this distaste for war is ambivalent as liberals accept that war may also be necessary to prevent interruptions to the market and to extend 'civilization'. Liberals therefore accept war as a historical necessity in establishing the reach of the market and the nation state; but once order has been established, military power is to be withdrawn and replaced with administrative forms of internal pacification (Giddens 1985). To frame it another way, once the green uniforms have subdued the territory, the blue uniforms manage it.

Liberal thought maintains that there is sharp and clear distinction between the green and blue, and it is this distinction between war and police that needs to be refused. That is, the creation of the distinction itself is what does the political work of liberal ideology in obfuscating the fact that the police mandate has always been a mandate of social war.

Police, war and capitalism

Historically, liberals have praised the spontaneity of the market, in contrast with the 'artificial, violent constructivism' of other societies, and presented this as a virtuous cycle where economic freedom regulates and reduces the need for state intervention (Losurdo 2011: 283). On one level, liberalism is a political philosophy in which peace and freedom are seen to be the end historical goals of the extension of market order. But this discourse of emancipation has been historically tangled with dis-emancipation in which violent policing operations to contain the dangerous classes and foreign barbarians are the mechanisms for extending peace (Losurdo 2011: 286, 342). Therefore, the precondition for liberty and the pursuit of rational self-interest is the extension of police and war power. Rather than being primarily focused on liberty, liberalism is thus a politics of security, concerned with reshaping individuals, groups and territories in the image of capital (Neocleous 2008: 5). It is in this pursuit of security in the name of liberty that the most authoritarian tendencies of liberalism become apparent, from police killings to the revival of torture and indefinite detention. The danger is not therefore that liberal states can become more like fascist ones through 'police militarization', but rather that security politics reveal the fascist or authoritarian tendencies within liberal democracy already (Neocleous 2008: 9).

Recent scholarship has focused on the idea of 'war: police assemblages' evident in 'contemporary liberal interventionism', such as in the combination of clandestine drone attacks and special force interventions, full scale military invasions and counter-insurgency which have characterised recent wars in the Middle East and beyond (Bell 2015). But as Ryan

(2013: 441) points out the history of policing indicates that these current assemblages are not a recent phenomenon – 'policing arrives once the condition for order have been violently established by the military so that reason of state can be implemented. Policing is the continuation of military actions by other means'. Viewed as continuum or assemblage, even a cursory survey highlights the extent to which the police have been central to the disciplining and oppression of the domestic enemies of liberal states . . . . the Americas were kept in line with slave patrols, which scholars are now increasingly viewing as one of the key forerunners of modern US policing (Hadden 2003). The police were also at the forefront of state efforts to control 'free labour' through the suppression of strikes and revolts in the workplace. To give the example of just one country, the police were key agents in the 'strikes (which moved) towards miniature civil wars between workers and the state' during periods of intense labour militancy in the United States (Brecher 1972: 236). However, this history is regularly omitted in contemporary discussions of police militarization.

The violent economy of chattel slavery and oppression of indigenous peoples gained their political force from the police power. Indeed, the Founders were in fact prepared to use military force to suppress internal revolt, such as in the case of the 1794 rebellion against the Whiskey Tax by farmers in Pennsylvania in which Alexander Hamilton led troops against the revolt (Zinn 1995: 100). Tracing the history of the police power and not just 'the police', Markus Dubber (2005) writes of the ways that the 'Founders' retained the notion of unlimited and undefinable police powers that operated in England. He writes, 'Ending the king's police power, it turns out, did not mean ending police power altogether . . . Americans didn't appreciate being policed, but they had no qualms about policing' (p. 83).

The point which derives from these examples is that the dual historical formation of the nation-state and capitalism saw military and police forces enrolled in shared projects of conquest and control. These different forces were joined as part of the machinery of State – 'armies of wars of colonial pacification, international competition and domestic repression' (Robinson 1983: 20). However, this is not to argue that the police are interchangeable with the military. Instead, they are able to conduct internal operations in a far more sustained but, when considering the historical record, often as violent a manner as military forces. . . .

Police institutions, thus, have a distinct role in 'facilitating authoritarianism and state violence . . . that the scholarly emphasis on "militarization" tends to ignore' (Seri 2012). The general thrust of much of the police militarization literature has been to portray police authoritarianism as intrinsic to non-liberal states but aberrant to capitalist democracies. Liberal societies are understood to be policed societies, in which the institutions work to achieve peace and prosperity in a regulated and consistent fashion, rather than police states, in which officers are at war with society. As argued in the previous section, this distinction omits the pivotal role played by police and military violence and terror in the foundation and extension of capitalism. But this is not limited to primitive accumulation but rather is a central, continuous process of pacification and of fabricating order through police patrolling, surveillance and governance. Police power is not restricted to repression of the state's enemies but in the daily regulation of society, from administering discriminatory labour practices and environmental practices to penalizing the illicit economic activities of the poor. Police both intervene in the workplace, through their involvement in strikes and industrial disputes, and are the key instruments in enforcing social control over the dispossessed 'underclass', who are not integrated into the labour force. In a history of class war in the United States originally published in 1931, the journalist Louis Adamic noted that the 'police club' was the pre-eminent symbol of capitalist power (p. 23). Almost a century later, the police club is now accompanied by pepper spray, tear gas, armoured vehicles and drones, but the police still represent the main force employed by the state to attack and control the

social tensions generated by economic inequality and exploitation – from industrial conflict in the early 20th century to street battles around austerity and crisis in the early 21st century. Of course, the nature of whom and what is policed changes over time, and in line with changes in capitalist order, from domination over nascent industrial proletariats in the 19th century to regular campaigns of harassment against the unemployed and migrants in the post-industrial badlands of neo-liberalism.

But even without the more high tech accoutrements, the generic officer on the beat is nevertheless a figure of considerable power who enforces state domination on the street, and in particular against the 'dangerous classes'. Indeed, Mike Brown was not gunned down in the middle of a Ferguson street by an overtly military-inspired SWAT agent. He was gunned down by the routine patrol officer, the state agent that is dressed in 'traditional' police attire and driving the 'traditional' police cruiser that more closely resembles the 'community policing solution' that so many public commentators have posited to supplant police militarization. Yet, soon after the routine execution of Brown, quickly most all of the controversy and criticism of the police power were aimed at the use of military gear, aesthetics, and tactics – attention was placed steadfastly on the spectacle of police–military repression. Of course, we are not suggesting that these developments should not be ruthlessly critiqued. They certainly demonstrate a significant ability of the local state to deploy maximum force. But here the spectacle stayed true to its own governing logic, hiding in plain sight the equally insidious violence of the 'good old police'.

Policing as pacification

The inability of the militarization argument to acknowledge how a patrol officer with a nightstick may be as much of a cause of terror and fear as the machine gun waving SWAT team unit, is further indicator of its liberal bent. Moreover, the popular lexicon of police militarization doesn't offer any ability to critique the police officer reading books to children at a public school, or passing out candy during a parade, or holding 'public forums', press conferences and 'community meetings'. Hence, instead of thinking about the police/war assemblage through the notion of militarization, it might be best to think of this through the idea of pacification.

. . . pacification became a means of original accumulation through the colonial conquests of the 17th century, only to be re-theorized, re-named and re-deployed across a plethora of more contemporary colonial geographies, from French counter-insurgency in Algeria and Indo-China, to Britain's engagements in Malaysia, Cyprus and Kenya, to US counter-insurgencies in Vietnam. Pacification is best thought of as a central strategy of the colonialist, capitalist state as it works to secure the insecurities of accumulation both domestically and internationally, and this lines up with the police mandate. Instead of only describing state power as a pacification project, Neocleous (2011) argues that critical theory should reappropriate the concept of pacification as a way of understanding the security politics of liberal order building, as capital works to secure accumulation and the state demands order.

As a way of thinking through the police and war assemblage as always about the fabrication of order and productive labour, the notion of pacification better highlights the ways that coercion and consent are always the flip sides to the security coin. That is, it usefully accounts for not only the excesses or spectacular forms of police violence that the militarization thesis is rightly concerned about but also offers a way of thinking through the routine, non-spectacular violence of 'Officer Friendly' as well as this agent's attempts of winning 'hearts and minds'. Pacification, then, helps to keep in constant focus the iron fist and velvet glove of police power.

While the militarization literature has highlighted the repressive impacts of the wars on drugs, crime and terror on policing, this has primarily been understood as a matter of error and bad policy, in which the inaccurate metaphor of war mutates the 'true' function of policing. Understood as pacification, the wars on drugs, crime and terror are not actually metaphors at all but are real wars which 'slip and slide from the foreign into the domestic and back again' (Neocleous 2011: 201). At different points, for instance, the war on drugs involved military engagements in Latin America, provided a rationale for expanded police powers and massive growth of the prison population in the United States. This logic of security is also repurposed for police and military projects undertaken by other states. For example, the war on drugs in Mexico and Colombia has been used to displace communities from resource rich areas, for attacks on labour organizing and to create an environment favourable for corporate investment (Paley 2014).

By failing to address the complex and sophisticated mechanisms of police repression in capitalist democracies, liberal critique ends up focusing on procedures and appearance to the 'point where ends are irrelevant' (Wolfe 1971: 34). The idea of militarization takes a legalistic focus on achieving the 'proper' form of policing, a discourse which easily be co-opted by the state. At core, it is based on a liberal frame of trying to establish appropriate boundaries between military and police, rather than looking at how war and police overlap and conjoin in the everyday governance of capitalism. It is focused on the apparent danger of liberal democracies becoming more like despotic political systems while obfuscating the fundamental violence of the liberal state. By contrast, thinking on police violence and state repression through the concept of pacification highlights that this is potentially already existent and apparent within liberalism itself. The problem is not that liberal democracies could become dystopic tyrannies through the negative pull of militarization, but rather that there is already a violent social war within capitalist society. And within this conflict, police institutions are central mechanisms for ensuring class and racial dominance already and have been since their founding.

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Section IV

Media and Ideology

It is unusual for a political sociology reader to include readings on the mass media. This is a significant oversight because the media are a major source of popular views on a wide variety of subject matter including politics. We are including five readings on the mass media which we think offer important insights on how the media work to both reflect and shape political beliefs.

Every year since the mid-1970s, the students, faculty, and staff at Sonoma State University in northern California have been putting together a very informative book on the media. The most recent edition is Censored 2020. Each year the editors list the top twenty-five censored news stories judged by a distinguished team of media specialists. What links these stories is that they often expose unethical or criminal behavior by corporations and government agencies. The stories are not literally censored, but instead they are published in small alternative publications or internet sites. Occasionally they are later picked up by mainstream media, but this is not the norm. Although the stories would inform the public on vital issues, most people never get to see them. Among the top twenty-five stories in the 2019 and 2020 editions we find:

US Oil and Gas Industry Set to Unleash 120 Billion Tons of New Carbon Emissions
New 5G Network Spurs Health Concerns
More Than 80,000 Stolen Guns Worsen Crime in Florida
How Big Wireless Convinced Us that Cell Phones and Wi-Fi Are Safe
US Women Face Prison Terms for Miscarriages
Ukrainian Fascists Trained US White Supremacists
Class Explains Millennials' "Stunted" Economic Lives
Developing Countries Medical Needs Unfulfilled by Big Pharma
Modern Slavery in the United States and Around the World
$21 Trillion in Unaccounted for Government Spending from 1998 to 2015

While the mainstream media give time and space to liberal commentators along with conservative ones who charge that the media are liberal, it is striking that none of the above stories received any coverage in a major urban daily paper anywhere in the United States. Nor were they broadcast on mainstream radio or television stations. Instead they appeared in small alternative press, publications such as The Asheville Global Report, The Texas Observer, Z Magazine, The Progressive, The Nation, Peacework, Mother Jones, and others.[1] The important question is why? Why is it that in a democracy where people need to have access to factual information about the important issues of the day to make informed political decisions, they are denied that information by the newspapers, magazines, and radio and television stations that most people read, listen to, and watch?

There are a number of factors that bear on this question, but the most important is that the media are commercialized big businesses operating to generate profits through the sale of time and space to advertisers. The Internet was a new and major development in media

but it too was quickly and heavily commercialized. In the first edition of his book The Media Monopoly in 1983, Ben Bagdikian reported that fifty firms dominated the mass media in the United States. By the time the sixth edition came out in the year 2000, Bagdikian reported that the number of dominant firms had been reduced to six. They were AOL/Time Warner, Disney, Viacom (an amalgam of CBS and Westinghouse), News Corporation, Bertelsmann, and General Electric. These six had more annual media revenues than the next twenty media corporations combined (Bagdikian 2000: x, xx; Phillips 2003: 171–79). These are vertically integrated firms that produce newspapers, magazines, books, movies, and radio and television programming. They also own broadcast and cable networks, and own or have interests in phone lines, cable systems, and satellite dishes (Bagdikian 2000: xvii).

The status of media corporations as giant economic enterprises means that they are linked through shared members of their boards of directors with hundreds of other large corporate enterprises. These media and nonmedia corporations broadly share the same class interests. They benefit from nonunion labor, cheaper labor, automated technologies, low taxes, accelerated depreciation on capital investments, subsidized and protected foreign investments, and growing concentrations of corporate wealth. This is reflected in the themes of their entertainment programs, what they decide is newsworthy, and how articles are written and where they are placed.

Our first reading is taken from Earl Wysong and Robert Perrucci's 2018 book Deep Inequality: Understanding the New Normal and How to Challenge It. In their chapter "The Future of Inequality: Polarization, Gridlock, and Global Warming" the authors examine the basic pluralist assumptions of the mainstream media which lend themselves nicely to the argument that we have large scale legislative inaction due to gridlock. In their dissent Wysong and Perrucci argue that when you introduce social class to the analysis most claims of gridlock fall to the wayside. First, there is a great deal less gridlock than is alleged. Indeed, there has been a great deal of cooperation between Republican and Democratic legislators, and the resulting public policies offer many benefits to major corporations and what the authors call the superclass. Wysong and Perrucci cite as examples major tax cuts, bailouts, and weakened regulation of corporate activities in the oil and natural gas and mining sectors, among others. We see this most recently in the 2020 stimulus package in response to the coronavirus pandemic. It offers minor financial payouts to the working class and the poor while, once again, major corporations reap multi-billion dollar payouts. Their second point is that "…many…gridlock-provoking issues are often infused with unspoken or latent class-related interests…." They provide a number of examples including abortion, presidential court and cabinet nominations, appropriation bills, charter schools, and drug crime sentencing. Wysong and Perrucci also address global warming. The media, they argue, present global warming as part of the new normal and a problem that is steadily getting worse. Vaguely defined human activity and natural causes are seen as the cause. Thus, the media ignore the near unanimity of climate scientists who stress human activity as the cause. Wysong and Perrucci believe the actual cause of global warming is capitalism which is an argument totally absent in the mass media and a position to which very few Americans are ever exposed.

The second selection taken from Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's pathbreaking book Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media. Herman and Chomsky argue that the role of the mass media is to communicate messages and symbols to the general public. Yet in a society with great inequalities in the distribution of wealth and riven by conflicting class interests, this requires "systematic propaganda." To explain how this system works they say that information must pass through five filters before it can be disseminated to the general public. This is not primarily a system of government censorship but a system that is built into the routines of information gathering and packaging. The first

filter is based on the size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media. The second is the dependence on advertising as a source of revenue The third is sourcing or the media's reliance on official sources (e.g. police departments, city hall, the White House) for stories and information and not other interested parties such as the victims of official sources. The fourth filter is flak—the intervention of conservative organizations which put pressure on the media to promote a conservative line consistent their views on domestic and foreign policy issues. The final filter is the ideology of anti-communism. The authors provide many examples of these filters in action.

In the next selection Edward S. Herman returns to the propaganda model to examine its relevance for today. His conclusion, after a careful analysis, is that the propaganda model is as applicable in today's world as when it was first published in the late 1980s.

Jerry Lembcke is the author of several important books on the Vietnam War. In The Spitting Image he investigated the claim that anti-Vietnam War protesters spit on returning GI's to express their opposition to the war and their alleged contempt for the troops. Lembcke fails to turn up any veterans who this actually happened to as opposed to veterans who heard about it happening to someone else. Lembcke labels the claim of spit upon vets a myth. Yet it is a powerful myth that echoes through the generations. The last time I checked in 2019 about a third of my own students said they had of heard of these spitting incidents. In a more recent book, Hanoi Jane, Lembcke asks why Jane Fonda's two trips to North Vietnam have led the right-wing to pin the loss of the war on her, especially when her trips garnered little attention at the time and she was neither the most notorious or even the best-known person to make the journey. Scapegoating Jane Fonda also reverberates through the generations. The seed for Lembcke's "Victim-Veterans and America's 'Lost War Narrative': The War in Vietnam Remembered" is a 2017 series in the New York Times to commemorate major events of the war. In one of the Times articles written by a veteran of the war the author refers to harassment by hippies at the San Francisco airport. This elicited a large number of on-line responses. The majority of these letters condemned the protestors and their alleged behavior. Lembcke then traces the ways in which the myth of the spit upon veteran has been used to mobilize public support for new, later American wars.

Juan Gonzáles and Joseph Torres are the authors of News for All the People: The Epic Story of Race and the American Media. Here they speak eloquently for themselves. "It is our contention that newspapers, radio, and television played a pivotal role in perpetuating racist views among the general population. They did so by routinely portraying non-white minorities as threats to white society and by reinforcing racial ignorance, group hatred, and discriminatory government policies.

Media thus assumed primary authorship of a deeply flawed national narrative: the creation myth of heroic European settlers battling an array of backward and violent non-white peoples to forge the world's greatest democratic republic. The first draft of America's racial history was not restricted to a particular geographical region or time period…the product of the virulent prejudices of a few influential media barons or opinion writers or of a specific chain of newspapers or television stations. Rather, it has persisted as a constant theme of American news reporting from the days of Publick Occurences, the first colonial newspaper to the age of the internet."

Note

1. Of the publications listed here, Peacework, a publication of the American Friends Service Committee, has ceased publication in any format. The Asheville Global Report is no longer in print but appears regularly on Direct and Satellite TV and other electronic formats. The Texas Observer comes out bi-monthly in print and

on-line. The Progressive and Mother Jones each put out six issues a year. Z is a monthly, in print and on-line. The Nation is published as a weekly as it has been since the 19th century. The leading alternative news source is now Amy Goodman's Democracy Now available on the internet, but there are many progressive on-line sites, for example, Counterpunch, Common Dreams, Jacobin, and Portside, among others.

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Chapter 19

The Future of Inequality

Polarization, Gridlock, and Global Warming

Earl Wysong and Robert Perrucci

From the recent past we have seen the emergence and intensification of a wide range of economic, political, and social inequalities that the corporate media have defined as the new normal. Given these realities, it appears likely the future will see a continuation and expansion of today's new normal inequalities. With an unhappy future looming, we focus on three final topics that are likely to intensify today's inequalities: political polarization, gridlock, and global warming. These issues evoke despair and hope regarding the future: despair, because they appear to pose grave threats to our democratic traditions and even to human life on the planet, and hope, because history reveals democracy has successfully overcome serious challenges in the past and that creative and resourceful humans have prevailed against long odds during great environmental changes spanning thousands of years. We lean toward hope, but nothing is certain, except this: the changes these issues portend will significantly influence the future experiences, opportunities, and life chances of all Americans.

The three issues in this chapter appear as themes woven into a general, media-promoted new normal narrative regarding what the future holds in the political arena and the natural world. The arc of this overall narrative essentially says, the future of politics and nature will be marked by unpredictability, disruption, and discomfort. One theme related to politics says, increasing political polarization and legislative gridlock are key features of an emergent new normal in the political arena.[1] The second theme that relates to the natural world says, rising temperatures, climate change, and weather extremes are becoming the new normal, and global warming may be driving these trends.[2]

The causes and consequences of these themes are described in general terms in media accounts. But these accounts exclude any consideration of how our unequal class system contributes to these themes or how it distributes their negative effects in an unequal fashion. In this chapter we correct for this media blackout by using our structural-realities narrative, with its focus on the class system, to explore these issues. We consider how the class structure relates to the development of political polarization and gridlock as well as global warming, climate change, and extreme weather. And we use it to explore how the effects of these phenomena are experienced in very different ways by Americans depending on their location in the class structure. Specifically, we review how the poor and working classes bear the brunt of the negative, unpredictable, disruptive, and even life-threatening effects of polarization, gridlock, and global warming and how those in the privileged class (especially the superclass) are largely insulated from the negative effects of those phenomena.

POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND GRIDLOCK: A NEW NORMAL FUTURE?

The interrelated topics of political polarization and legislative gridlock often appear in media accounts concerning the ideological divisions separating Democrats and Republicans in Washington, and in reports on the inability of Congress to act on a wide range of issues. These topics are viewed by many journalists and commentators in the corporate media as major new normal developments. For example, one journalist who endorses this viewpoint states, "Congressional polarization is one of the most important American political trends of recent decades."[3] And on the gridlock topic, another says, "Congress increasingly is being defined by what it's not doing."[4] The expression of such views in the media has become increasingly commonplace as indicated by the amount of press coverage devoted to these topics in recent years. For example, the topics of "political polarization" and congressional or legislative "gridlock" appeared nearly three times as often in U.S. newspapers during President Obama's administration than during President G. W. Bush's administration.[5]

POLARIZATION AND GRIDLOCK: MEDIA NARRATIVES

Corporate media reports on political polarization and gridlock typically focus on what are framed as deep ideological divisions between "conservative" Republicans and more "liberal" Democrats in Congress and Washington generally. Polarized political ideologies are often presented by the media as grounded in deeply held principles that make compromise difficult. Hence we see gridlock, because the two sides can't agree on substantive issues. Political polarization is claimed by media accounts to be the result of many factors such as the emergence of the ultraconservative "Tea Party" movement, the gerrymandering of congressional districts, the rise of single-issue special-interest groups (e.g., evangelicals), the use of social media to spread political messages (e.g., the Tea Party and "Bernie's Revolution"), reality TV (e.g., *The Celebrity Apprentice*), the growth of cable TV "opinion" news (e.g., *Fox News, MSNBC,* and *CNN*), right-wing talk radio (e.g., Rush Limbaugh), and the use of primary elections to choose candidates for elective offices (which leads them to tailor their messages in primaries to a "base" of immoderate, "true-believer purists").[6]

When political polarization leads to gridlock, media accounts tend to focus on the drama associated with disputes between warring congressional factions and on whether or how stalemates will be resolved. Ideologically based conflicts that lead to gridlock frequently involve issues that on the surface do not explicitly or overtly embody conflicting class interests. These issues are often described by warring sides and media reports as conflicts between competing ideological views over policies supported and opposed by *interest groups*.

Such views are understandable in that media reports on the polarization-gridlock topics are typically grounded in a pluralist model of politics and government. An example of this model was evident in a 2017 *Fortune* article on Donald Trump by the magazine's editor who stated, "This President-elect appears to have the first opportunity in a decade to break through the Washington gridlock and get stuff done."[7] Implied by his comment is the idea that Congress has been mired in a decade-long legislative gridlock wasteland because of polarizing competition between special-interest groups and a president unwilling or unable to lead Congress out of its long legislative stalemate. Other voices in the corporate media reinforce the editor's view that President Trump will be able to break the Washington special-interest-fueled gridlock. Some suggest this is the case because Trump, unlike Obama, is less wedded to antibusiness special-interest groups. As a financial industry strategist put

it, with President Trump we will be "going from kind of an antibusiness environment to more of a pro-business environment."[8]

POLARIZATION AND GRIDLOCK: STRUCTURAL REALITIES

The observations of most corporate-based commentators on the polarization and gridlock topics conveniently omit references to information that would contradict their pluralist-based narratives. By contrast, our structural-realities narrative examines polarization and gridlock by focusing on a wide range of information related to the class system, class inequalities, and class conflict; these issues and information related to them are not found in corporate media narratives on polarization and gridlock. For example, as presented in the media, most gridlock cases appear as though they are *not directly related to conflicting class interests*. However, in our view many (but not all) gridlock-provoking issues are often infused with unspoken or latent class-related interests and the links between such issues, and divided class interests are not always obvious. Examples of gridlock issues with conflicting class interests subtexts can be found in conflicts over (1) social issues (e.g., "identity politics," transgendered "bathroom wars," and abortion); (2) presidential nominees (e.g., Supreme Court justices and cabinet secretaries); (3) appropriations bills (e.g., conflicts between deficit "hawks" and "doves"); (4) educational policies (e.g., conflicts over charter schools); (5) criminal justice policies (e.g., private prisons and drug sentencing guidelines); and (6) policy contests involving "special-interest groups" (e.g., conflicts between drug companies and trial lawyers).

Another example of the contrast between media narratives on polarization and gridlock and our structural-realities narrative on those topics concerns the issue of class-based exceptions to what the media often claim has been a decade-long period of congressional stalemate. When the media claim political polarization and gridlock have largely paralyzed the federal government for many years, such claims typically ignore or overlook striking examples of congressional *action*. From the standpoint of our structural-realities perspective, the last several years have witnessed many examples of vigorous governmental action, not inaction or gridlock where *superclass interests and policies supporting that class are concerned*.

Over the past decade, Presidents Bush and Obama as well as successive Congresses took decisive steps via executive actions and legislation that benefited wealthy elites and large corporations but largely ignored workers' interests. Examples of class-biased activism by the executive and legislative branches began with the Bush administration's bailout of the too-big-to-fail Wall Street banks via, among other actions, congressional passage of the huge "Troubled Asset Relief Program" (TARP) benefiting large investment banks. President Obama, with help from Congress, extended Bush's corporate bailout policies to include General Motors, Chrysler, and other major U.S. firms. President Obama also pressured Congress to pass a business-friendly major economic stimulus bill, the health-insurance-industry-vetted Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and legislation making the Bush tax cuts permanent.[9] On trade issues, Obama strongly supported the corporate-backed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement. (President Trump withdrew the United States from the TPP, but unions, consumer and environmental groups, and other opponents in and out of Congress had effectively killed the deal before Trump took office.)[10] The point is this: viewed from our structural-realities approach, the last decade is replete with examples of presidential actions and congressional legislation that benefited the economic interests of wealthy elites and the large firms they own and control. What is portrayed in corporate media narratives as a decade of gridlock looks, from our perspective, more like a decade of aggressive accommodation of superclass interests by successive presidents and Congresses.[11]

What we see in the media is a narrative pattern that (1) highlights the *seeming* political polarization of and gridlock in Congress over what are often portrayed as "social issues" (*issues not obviously, overtly, or directly linked to conflicting class interests*), and (2) ignores action by Congress on legislation supporting superclass interests. This pattern helps obscure the existence and significance of class-based divisions and alliances in Congress. The class-based reality is that most congressional members represent the interests of wealthy elites. Indeed, Congress itself is a class-divided body where "most members . . . are either millionaires themselves or well on the way to the 1 percent kingdom."[12] The class-based polarization of Congress is unevenly divided between a huge superclass-friendly majority and a small working-class-supportive minority. This lopsided division *almost never* leads to legislative gridlock on superclass-supported issues (except in unusual historical circumstances). The small congressional minority supportive of middle- and working-class interests cannot block policies supported by the dominant majority aimed at advancing the interests of wealthy elites and large corporations. At the same time, proposals offered by the pro-working-class minority that support workers' class interests are, in most cases, ignored or defeated by the large majority wedded to elite-class interests.

We are not suggesting that gridlock on issues that *appear* unrelated to class interests is trivial or harmless. Gridlock on divisive social issues with latent class-related interests reinforces political polarization between pro- and antigroups in the larger society as illustrated by the continuing battles over abortion.[13] Legislative gridlock often mirrors and reinforces conflicts and intolerance between groups with opposing views on issues that have direct and indirect links to race, sex, and class inequalities (e.g., violent policing, gay rights, and climate change). Gridlock can also be harmful to middle- and working-class Americans when, for example, it stalls federal funding for projects and programs important to their interests. Congressional inaction on a bill to aid Flint, Michigan, a city struggling with lead-contaminated water, illustrates this situation. Federal funding for infrastructure repairs that would provide safe drinking water for Flint's residents was blocked by members of Congress who wanted to ensure "that the money is paid for without adding to the deficit."[14] This episode of gridlock also illustrates how such stalemates can have larger policy implications. In this case, congressional inaction on funding to help resolve Flint's water-quality problems also "snagged a far-reaching measure on energy."[15]

POLARIZATION AND GRIDLOCK: THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND PRESIDENT TRUMP

The topics of political polarization and legislative gridlock were woven through the presidential election of 2016. Trump claimed that unlike Clinton, he was a businessman who knew how to get things done. The implication was that as president he would put an end to gridlock, but his campaign exacerbated rather than tempered political polarization. This was evident by the sharp divisions between his supporters and opponents—stoked by his bombastic rhetoric and attacks on groups and individuals he disliked (often via Twitter). At the same time, Clinton's denunciation of some Trump supporters as "deplorables" added to the polarizing politics of the election.[16] But average American voters seemed to be less concerned about congressional gridlock than with *actions* taken by past presidents and Congresses that had diminished their incomes, opportunities, and life chances.

As 2016 unfolded, many middle- and working-class Americans were well aware that the long class war had shifted increasing shares of wealth, income, and power to wealthy elites at their expense. After all, this was one of Bernie Sanders's main themes, but Clinton's nomination quashed Sanders's populist crusade. That left Trump as the only "outsider" in the race.

His theme of "Make America Great Again" resonated with average-income Americans disenchanted with politics as usual. Frustrated by decades of decline and increasingly immiserated, alienated, and angry about their marginalized status, many in the middle and working classes surveyed their choices and voted for Trump.[17] Why? Perhaps it was partly because he successfully sold himself as a maverick Washington "outsider" (despite being a billionaire) seemingly ready to "blow up" a rigged system that had done nothing for average voters or their kids or grandkids for the last forty years. Many saw no reason to vote for Clinton, not when her message to workers seemed to be, I can manage your continued decline better than the other guy.[18]

The irony is that President Trump, who attracted many average-income voters with his seeming economic populism and anti–free trade pronouncements, will likely betray those supporters. In his inaugural address, he reiterated populist themes that served him well during his campaign: "For too long, a small group in our nation's Capitol has reaped the rewards of government while the people have born the cost. Washington has flourished, but the people did not share in its wealth. . . . That all changes starting right here and now. . . . January 20, 2017 will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again."[19] His speech, like Obama's in 2009, seemed to promise "hope and change" to "the forgotten men and women of our country." But based on what he has proposed in terms of tax and regulatory policies and his selection of a nearly full slate of neoliberal superclass elites to serve in his cabinet, Trump will almost certainly pursue a reactionary rather than an authentic populist political agenda. Perhaps it was because so many Americans anticipated this and other negative prospects that Trump "entered the White House with the lowest Gallup approval rating—45%—since such things were measured."[20]

Some of President Trump's high-profile legislative proposals such as tax cuts for the rich and large corporations may flounder on a rising wave of polarized resistance and gridlocked stalemate.[21] Media reports following Trump's inauguration speech suggested that may be likely. As a *Time* reporter put it, "If he truly means what he said . . . Washington is about to become even more rancorous."[22] If Trump's entire policy wish list is somehow realized, he will likely preside over the most antiworker, pro-superclass, pro-corporate administration since William McKinley. Exhibit A: Many of Trump's millionaire and billionaire cabinet secretary nominees have histories of hostile opposition to the departments they were chosen to lead.[23] Exhibit B: Among Trump's first executive actions were directives aimed at expediting construction of the stalled Keystone XL and Dakota Access oil pipelines.[24] Exhibit C: After Trump's election, Wall Street shifted into a full-on, euphoria-driven, vertical-bull market that rose to record heights and then hovered there after Trump's inauguration—waiting for his economic miracle to materialize.[25]

Wall Street's excesses were completely disconnected from the tepid (at best) state of the U.S. economy and wimpy corporate profits.[26] The stock market boom could only be explained by what wealthy investors *expected* to be the hallmarks of a Trump administration buoyed by Republican majorities in Congress: huge tax cuts for the rich and large corporations; fewer regulations on corporations and corporate mergers; normalizing monopolies and oligopolies as routine business models; a "tax holiday" for cash-rich firms to bring profits from abroad to the United States at bargain rates; and maybe even the privatization of Medicare and Social Security.[27] These and other prospects fascinate superclass leaders and a corporate community left breathless by visions of multi-trillion-dollar tax cuts and cost-plus government contracts—for them, not workers. As 2017 unfolded, President Trump and Congress appeared determined to channel substantive proposals supporting workers' interests into a legislative dead zone and to bullet-train pro-superclass, pro-corporate bills into law. Those trends were quickly apparent despite Trump's "America First" rhetoric and public

support for trade policies protecting American jobs. In the gilded age of Trump, a bifurcated political new normal appears to be emerging marked by symbolic gestures of support for workers combined with substantive support for policies that benefit wealthy elites and large corporations.

GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: A NEW NORMAL FUTURE?

The topics of global warming and climate change are often linked in media accounts that deal with environmental issues. In many reports the two terms are used almost interchangeably and appear to be nearly synonymous.[28] This is understandable since the former implies the latter: as the planet grows warmer, climate change occurs as an inevitable consequence of higher temperatures. Research on how the public views the terms *global warming* and *climate change* "suggests that the public responds to [both terms] in a similar fashion."[29] Reports on both topics often include references to how these phenomena *may* be linked to extreme weather events, but they also emphasize the uncertainties of the scientific research concerning such links.[30] Media coverage of global warming, climate change, and extreme weather has increased substantially in recent years compared to earlier periods. For example, 861 references to the linked topics of "global warming—weather" and "climate change—weather" appeared in U.S. newspapers during 2009–2016 compared to 191 during 2001–2008. U.S. newspaper references to "extreme weather" totaled 3,210 in 2009–2016 compared to 1,886 in 2001–2008.[31]

GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: MEDIA NARRATIVES

In our review of media accounts that deal with global warming, climate change, and extreme weather, we find a common narrative theme stated or implied: these phenomena and their effects on our lives, now and in the future, are part of an emerging new normal in the natural world. This natural new normal is presented by the media as disruptive, permanent, and likely to intensify. We are told we must recognize its reality, get used to it, and figure out how to accommodate and cope with it. As one media report put it, "Decisions on where and how to rebuild after a storm or flood, or whether to rebuild at all . . . are decisions we're going to face with increasing frequency as the planet continues to warm."[32] Parallel with the disruption theme are accounts of solutions to the problems of global warming/climate change. Many media reports suggest the United States can effectively deal with the disruptive effects of the emerging natural new normal by developing new policies and technologies that would promote energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions, and provide economic incentives to businesses and cities to reduce their "carbon footprints."[33]

Media accounts concerning global warming/climate change topics often include references to the two factors most often cited as likely drivers of these phenomena: human activities and natural causes. The most common narrative theme in media accounts discussing these two factors is one of uncertainty regarding their separate or combined effects on global warming, climate change, and extreme weather events. What is not uncertain are the views of many scientists cited or quoted in media reports on global warming and climate change. Many are quite certain that these phenomena are "real" and that human activities are centrally involved in driving them.[34] It is a certainty that most journalists do not embrace. Perhaps this is the case because to do so might require reporting on large corporate polluters that may also be major sources of advertising revenues for media firms.

GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: STRUCTURAL REALITIES

In contrast to media narratives that say global warming and climate change are driven by uncertain causes and that they are part of an emerging new normal natural world that we must learn to accept and deal with, the structural-realities narrative offers a different view. This approach focuses on the links among global warming/climate change, the capitalist economic system, and the class structure that reflects and sustains capitalism and its many inequalities. These links are readily evident in the human costs and casualties of global warming/climate change and in the extent to which the poor, minorities, and working classes bear the brunt of environmental pollution and degradation.

A research report by DARA and the Climate Vulnerability Forum estimates that "climate change already causes 400,000 deaths each year on average [and] the present carbon-intensive economy is linked to 4.5 million deaths worldwide each year."[35] The report also calls attention to the class-based nature of these human costs: "Of these losses, it is the world's poorest communities within lower- and middle-income countries that are most exposed."[36] Looking to the future, the World Health Organization estimates that "between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths each year."[37] In the United States, studies of environmental inequality "have found that minorities and low-income communities often bear disproportionate pollution burdens."[38] One study found that "EPA Scores of Industrial Air Toxics Exposure" were three times higher in neighborhoods with median household incomes of $25,000 to $35,000 than in neighborhoods with median household incomes over $100,000. While the poor are more likely to be exposed to higher pollution levels than the nonpoor, race and ethnicity also influence exposure levels: "In general, poor minorities . . . face higher exposure [levels] than poor whites, and non-poor minorities face higher exposure [levels] than non-poor whites."[39]

In the following sections we use our structural-realities perspective to explore four topics we believe will help us better understand the merits of our approach to global warming and climate change: (1) public attitudes on global warming/climate change; (2) American capitalism as a kind of paradox; (3) a radical critique of capitalism as the primary cause of global warming/climate change; and (4) the moderate reform approach to global warming/climate change. We think this inquiry will help us see how our approach differs from the media narrative that says global warming/climate change is just part of today's new normal natural world: another new normal we need to accept and move on.

GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE: PUBLIC ATTITUDES

Public attitudes on global warming and climate change appear to reflect the influence of both media narratives on these topics *and* political party affiliations tied to polarized ideological views. National surveys reveal a majority of Americans are concerned about global warming and climate change. Indeed, "64 percent say they worry a 'great deal' or 'fair amount' about climate change, and nearly 6 in 10 believe the effects have begun."[40] Despite this seeming consensus, responses to survey questions concerning the seriousness of global warming and climate change are sharply divided by political party affiliations. Among Republicans, 66 percent viewed global warming as "not a real problem" or "not likely to become a crisis." Only 23 percent viewed it as a major problem that could become a crisis. Among Democrats, 71 percent viewed global warming as a major problem that could become a crisis or as already a crisis. Only 15 percent said it was not a real problem.[41] (Almost

identical response patterns among Republicans and Democrats were found in a separate survey with questions that substituted "climate change" for "global warming.")

When asked about reports that 2015 was the Earth's warmest year since reliable record keeping began, most Americans who were aware of these reports say they accept them as accurate (63 percent said they were aware). Among U.S. adults, 69 percent said they believe the reports are accurate, while 27 percent say they are not. But despite Republicans and Democrats being "similarly aware of the reports about 2015's record warmth, there are striking partisan differences in terms of belief in the reports' accuracy: 84% of Democrats believe them, compared with 52% of Republicans."[42] (In early 2017, 2016 was reported by U.S. government scientists to have been warmer than 2015.)[43]

When asked about the causes of 2015's record warmth, 49 percent of U.S. adults said the "main cause" was human-caused climate change, while 46 percent said the "main cause" was natural changes in the Earth's temperatures.[44] Views regarding the causes of record warmth varied substantially by political party affiliation, as was the case with accuracy. The Gallup report notes that "climate change has become a highly polarized political issue. . . . While 72 percent of Democrats attribute the record temperatures to human-caused climate change, only 27 percent of Republicans do so."[45] Among Republicans, 72 percent attribute 2015's record warmth to natural causes, but only 24 percent of Democrats share this view. Independents are almost equally split: 47 percent say the record warmth was due to climate change, while 48 percent say it was due to natural changes.[46]

These survey findings illustrate that public attitudes on the reality, causes, and seriousness of global warming and climate change are sharply divided by political party affiliations. And these affiliations appear to reflect the sharp ideological-political polarization evident in the U.S. population.[47] Indeed, polarization in the United States has become so intense that 43 percent of Republicans have *very unfavorable* views about the Democratic Party and 38 percent of Democrats have *very unfavorable* views about the Republican Party. Moreover, "36 percent of Republicans see the Democratic Party as a threat to the nation's well being," and 27 percent of Democrats see the Republican Party as such a threat.[48] The existence of highly polarized ideological views dividing Democrats and Republicans on numerous issues including the environment appear to preclude any national consensus on what, if any, public policies should be enacted to mitigate the effects of global warming and climate change.

THE PARADOX OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM?

A paradox occurs when a person, idea, or phenomenon possesses or exhibits what appear to be contradictory aspects or qualities (e.g., believing you can eat as much as you want and still lose weight). The structural-realities approach calls attention to a seeming paradox of American capitalism involving what appear to be two contradictory features: On one hand, capitalism, viewed from a structural-realities perspective, is an economic system that generates outcomes and consequences that are destructive to the environment.[49] (This view is summarized in the next section.) On the other hand, national surveys reveal that a majority of Americans have a very positive view of capitalism; they see it as a desirable, efficient, prosperity-generating economic system. Recent polls show a majority of Americans holds favorable views of capitalism (55 percent), and an even larger majority (69 percent) holds favorable views of "free market" capitalism.[50]

The key to understanding the second part of this seeming paradox (favorable public attitudes) can be found, we believe, in the class structure generated and sustained by capitalism. Two features of this structure that first emerged alongside early capitalism in England in the late 1700s are relevant to the U.S. class structure and public attitudes toward capitalism

today. First was the development of two basic classes with conflicting interests: the owners of productive property and workers (nonowners). Second was the development of a pro-capitalism idea system or ideology that justified and legitimated capitalism and the inequalities it produced, including the polarized, two-class system.[51]

THE U.S. CLASS STRUCTURE, IDEOLOGY, SOCIALIZATION, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The U.S. class structure produced by the global-monopoly-finance version of capitalism today is far more complex than the structure that emerged in England in the late 1700s. Even so, there are important similarities between the class structures in both historical time periods. Early capitalism produced a class structure that generated, by ownership-class influence and funding, a pro-capitalist ideology that was woven into law, religion, education, and popular culture.[52] It was an ideology that was disseminated via many institutions into the lives and minds of workers who were socialized to accept it. And to the extent that workers embraced this new ideology (though many resisted), they also embraced the economic system the ideology justified even though it did not serve their interests. The emergence and dissemination (and even forced acceptance) of a pro-capitalism ideology in the late 1700s is not unlike what we find to be the case in the United States today. Just as English workers were pressured by wealthy elites to accept capitalism and the ideology supporting it in the late 1700s (and penalized for defiance), so too are American workers pressured in the twenty-first century.

Virtually all Americans are socialized in schools, by the media, and through popular culture to view capitalism as a positive, largely benevolent economic system and to accept it as the "natural" and best way to organize the economic activities of this or any society. The messages that encourage this view of capitalism are not considered to be ideologically biased propaganda by most people, because capitalism is simply considered to be normal. It is not the new normal; it is the *original* normal. Some of the pro-capitalism messages that American institutions convey to the public are crudely propagandistic, but others are more subtle and nuanced. Public school lessons on capitalism often fall, for example, into the propaganda category; however, popular culture products such as reality or game-show TV programs focused on competing participants are not didactic, but their form and content convey pro-capitalistic messages (e.g., the strong win, greed is good, and money matters most).

Many Americans have been exposed to lessons on capitalism in the public schools. Long ago when I was a high school student, my classmates and I were taught that communism "looked good in theory or on paper," but in "reality" it was a system that destroys freedom, enslaves people, causes economic stagnation, and governs by dictatorship. At the same time, we were taught the virtues of capitalism: it promotes freedom, democracy, creativity, opportunity, and economic prosperity. After being "taught" these contrasting views, we were assigned to write an essay on why capitalism was superior to communism. We really didn't know communism from rheumatism, but we knew what to say. At that time we believed what we wrote in our essays was the whole truth. No critical thinking was asked or expected of us by our teacher, and the conclusions we drew then were our gospel.

CAPITALISM, ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS, AND RESOLVING THE PARADOX

The point of this excursion into the ideological component of the class structure is to remind us that we are exposed in many ways throughout our lives to ideas, images, messages, stories, and popular culture content that tell us capitalism is good; it is a positive force promoting

progress and prosperity. Thus, it is not surprising that national surveys show most Americans agree with what they read, see, and hear about the virtues of capitalism. But despite widespread support for capitalism, when it comes to environmental issues, public attitudes suggest many Americans view large companies with suspicion. We know from our earlier review of public attitudes on global warming/climate change that Americans are concerned with these issues. More generally, a recent poll found a substantial minority of adults (43 percent) is dissatisfied with the "quality of the environment in the nation."[53] And despite the fact that most Americans hold favorable views of capitalism, in one poll 50 percent said that large U.S. companies are "doing a poor, or very poor job protecting the environment."[54]

The survey results reported above indicate that many Americans recognize that *some* large U.S. companies pollute the environment. However, when Americans consider this issue, most do so through a pluralist lens. That is, they see *some forms* of environmental degradation as being caused by the actions of *some large corporations,* but they attribute this situation to a few "bad corporate apples" and not to capitalism as an inherently destructive force ravaging the environment. For example, in national surveys only 20 percent of Americans want government regulations on industries increased, but 55 percent are either satisfied with current regulations or want regulations *decreased*.[55] Even among young Americans (ages eighteen to twenty-nine), a group where one-third say they "support socialism," majority support for more government environmental regulations is lacking.[56] A recent Harvard University poll found only 37 percent of young Americans agreed that "government should do more to curb climate change even at the expense of jobs."[57]

To summarize this section, three factors help us understand how the seeming paradox of American capitalism is not a paradox at all: (1) the socialization of Americans to a pro-capitalism ideology; (2) Americans' pluralistic view of the corporate-pollution nexus; and (3) the nearly invisible level of public awareness of the view that capitalism is *the* main cause of global warming/climate change. As we have seen, most Americans are concerned about the environment, including global warming and climate change. And many think large U.S. corporations are not doing enough to protect the environment. Yet, not only have Americans been socialized to view capitalism positively, but also national surveys tell us a majority of Americans accept that view. They may think some businesses are "bad apples" when it comes to environmental harm (e.g., dirty fossil-fuel types), but nearly 70 percent of Americans view "free market" capitalism as the penultimate economic system.

While all Americans have been exposed to the free market Kool-Aid, few have been exposed to the critique of capitalism as *the* cause of global warming/climate change. It is a view held by only a small number of Americans and one that is certainly not widely disseminated by the corporate media.[58] And even if Americans were more aware of the critical view, widespread public support for capitalism would lead most people to reject it out of hand. As a result of the three factors listed above, there is no paradox of American capitalism: it simply does not occur to most Americans that capitalism could be *the* main cause of global warming, climate change, extreme weather, or other forms of environmental degradation. And even if the thought did occur, it would be rejected by most who see capitalism as hero, not villain. Even so, the view of capitalism as environmental villain persists.

RADICAL CRITIQUE: CAPITALISM, GLOBAL WARMING, AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Despite the sanguine view of capitalism held by most Americans, some embrace a highly critical version of the structural-realities approach that sees capitalism as *the* cause of environmental degradation. Perhaps the best-known, forcefully articulated view of capitalism as

the central cause of global warming and climate change is presented by Naomi Klein in her recent best-selling book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Although Klein is a journalist and author, not a scientist, the conclusions she develops are based on relevant scientific evidence and the political-economy foundation of capitalism. In her book she conducts a thorough review of the scientific literature on global warming/climate change and considers how the findings from that literature plus the concentrated economic and political power of neoliberal capitalism inexorably lead to environmental destruction. In her view, the situation is dire: "The things we must do to avoid catastrophic warming . . . are now in conflict with the fundamental imperative at the heart of our economic model: grow or die. . . . Our economy is at war with many forms of life on earth, including human life. . . . It is time to turn this around now. Is it possible? Absolutely. Is it possible without challenging the fundamental logic of deregulated capitalism? Not a chance."[59]

In the quote above, Klein calls attention to how the "grow or die" feature of capitalism is in conflict with economic policies and practices needed to avoid catastrophic warming such as reducing the global production of environmental toxins, especially carbon dioxide. In addition to this feature, critical Marxist authors call attention to other elements of capitalism that contribute to its role as a causal agent driving global warming/climate change.[60] For example, capitalism's distinctive feature of private ownership of productive property ensures that decisions regarding the production of goods and services, the disposition of toxic materials generated by production processes, and the distribution of profits are determined by private owners based on their self-interests.

Executive decisions regarding the operation of capitalistic enterprises are primarily driven by profit maximization considerations. Among other things this means that for the most part, production costs are "externalized." This is a term that calls attention to practices whereby capitalistic firms channel unwanted, often toxic by-products of production into the physical environment at zero or minimal costs to producers. Free or low-cost disposal of waste boosts profits, but such practices produce huge costs not borne by the producer firms. Toxic waste products routinely produce severe adverse effects on the health of workers, communities, and local, regional, and planetary ecosystems. A second form of externalization occurs when firms that produce consumer products that are harmful or toxic are held unaccountable for the harm they cause to the well-being of consumers and the integrity of the physical environment.[61] Externalized costs are not paid for by firms but by the public and the planet.

What might be called the Klein-Marxist critique argues that the basic features of capitalism cause it to be an inherently destructive environmental force. It says capitalistic firms and the entire system act in ways that not only destroy the environment but also devour resources that cannot be replaced. Thus, it is an economic system that cannot be sustained because its logic forces it to pursue actions, policies, and practices that destroy and consume the natural environment. In short, capitalism is not sustainable. Given this analysis, the only long-term solution to the ecological problems caused by capitalism is to *replace it*. To its critics, this typically means replacing it with an economic system organized not around profit but around meeting human needs in ways that are compatible with and that sustain the natural environment and the complex ecosystems within it. Various versions of what might be called "eco-friendly socialism" are often cited by critics of capitalism as reasonable replacement choices.[62]

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN THE SYSTEM: MODERATE REFORMERS

In contrast to the Klein-Marxist critique are the views of what might be called moderate reformers who see global warming/climate change as caused by a wide variety of human

activities that are not necessarily dictated by the logic and practices of capitalism. Organizations working to protect the environment within the framework of existing economic systems, including capitalism, include groups such as the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and 350.org.[63] These and similar groups view environmentally destructive human activities as those that involve, for example, unregulated industrial production, uncontrolled waste disposal, mass marketing and consumption, and other wasteful and toxin-producing practices. Such organizations do not view capitalism as the sole or even the primary source of activities or practices that harm the environment. Their view is that all economic systems, businesses, cities, and other organizations that either are not concerned with or are presently unaccountable for how their waste-producing (or waste-facilitating) activities negatively impact the environment, contributing to global warming, climate change, and other forms of environmental harm.

The solutions these groups advocate to address environmental problems including global warming and climate change involve *reforms* that would regulate, or in some cases end, current practices that cause environmental harm. Their focus is on policies that would *regulate* polluters (e.g., fossil-fuel-producing companies and fossil-fuel-consuming entities such as cities or products such as autos). They favor government-implemented and government-enforced regulations that would protect the environment by, for example, rewarding firms that comply and sanctioning those that do not. This includes rewarding firms committed to building a "green economy" via, for example, increasing energy production from wind, solar, biomass, and other renewable, *sustainable* sources. They also favor government-mandated rules and procedures that would promote "transparency" regarding how the activities of firms impact the environment. This means that firms would be required to provide public groups or government regulators (or both) with complete information on how their production, marketing, and waste-disposal practices impact the environment so that those activities could be monitored and tracked by public groups or government regulators (or both).[64]

THE FUTURE IS NOW: TOWARD A NEW, NEW NORMAL

The topics reviewed in this chapter, polarization, gridlock, and global warming/climate change, are not only interrelated to each other but also linked, in various ways, to the inequalities explored in earlier chapters. As this book illustrates, many of the inequalities that have eroded the living standards and opportunities of average Americans over the past four decades have been woven into an overarching neoliberal, new normal media narrative. It is a multidimensional narrative, but as we have noted, its many themes convey the same gloomy message in different ways: sharp inequalities in income and wealth are here to stay; the American dream has been permanently downsized; and the future portends a bumpy, dirty decline in workers' wages, life chances, and environmental quality. Down is the new up, so get used to it. *There is no alternative to the new normal!*

But not so fast. Inequality warriors opposed to the new normal and all of its attendant inequalities have a different view: there are *many* alternatives. What they and many average Americans distressed by today's unequal new normal share is a longing for a *new, new normal*. In the presidential campaign, candidate Trump seemed to sense and speak to Americans' desire for such a goal. But Trump's vision was built around an imagined golden age of the past as suggested by his "Make America Great Again" slogan. It's true his "new, new normal pitch" included harshly punitive nativistic, authoritarian, anti–big government themes, but its economic populist message of a fair deal for workers and their families resonated with

many in the working class. Of course, his intemperate rhetoric and plutocratic instincts (evident in his policy priorities and cabinet appointments) make it clear that the new, new normal he envisions is very different from what most average Americans and battle-hardened inequality warriors favor as an alternative to the polarizing new normal Trump cleverly campaigned against.

Perhaps it was an ironic (or karmic) coincidence that six days after Trump's inauguration, the U.S. Department of Labor issued a press release announcing that the union membership rate in the United States had fallen yet again. At 10.7 percent in 2016, it was down 0.4 percentage point from 2015 and was less than half the 26 percent level of the mid-1970s.[65] Many wealthy elites were cheered by the news. It was further proof that their forty-year war against workers' wages, benefits, and political clout was still working. And President Trump likely shared their glee (privately of course). As noted earlier, Trump publicly supports workers' interests, but actions he has taken across his billionaire-businessman career and as president suggest his administration is more likely to be defined by national neoliberalism and crony capitalism than by consistent, meaningful support for workers' interests.[66]

The election of President Trump accentuated and inflamed the political polarization of America into ideologically divided camps. Although Trump won the electoral college vote, he lost the popular vote as nearly three million more voters chose Clinton over him.[67] After his inauguration, he tweeted his petulance, attributing Clinton's majority to millions of illegal voters and calling for an investigation into voter fraud.[68] Promising action on all things symbolic and doing nothing on all things substantive seems to be his style—where average Americans are concerned. On global warming and climate change? Trump says, Forget about it! On congressional gridlock? Who cares? Trump plots end runs around his enemies in Congress and elsewhere via tweets, executive orders, and maybe even a return to something akin to Nixon's "enemies list."

Today, resistance is in the air.[69] The inequality wars waged by those who battled the new normal before Trump's election continued after his inauguration with redoubled intensity. This was especially evident in the sharp political battles in mid-2017 over the health-care policy "reforms" proposed by President Trump and his congressional Republican supporters as they sought to "repeal and replace Obamacare."[70] Numerous progressive groups and organizations led vigorous local and national campaigns against Trump's health-care "reform" proposals. Their efforts were supported by large numbers of average Americans as well as by many prominent congressional Democrats.[71]

National surveys tell us Americans have little confidence in Trump, but we know many Americans support a *progressive* new, new normal. What would it look like? It would build on policies and programs like the ones Bernie Sanders outlined during his presidential primary campaign.[72] Examples of reforms advocated by many progressive groups today include creating millions of living wage jobs; progressive tax rates; universal health care; revitalized public education; tuition-free college; breaking up big banks; criminal justice reform; infrastructure repair; fair-trade policies; clean energy; creating a sustainable, green economy; and democratic control of the economy, unlike the neoliberal model.[73] These are not utopian fantasies. They are based on real-world needs and policies supported by millions of Americans. Moreover, many progressive organizations and elected government officials at all levels are on record as supporting such policies.[74]

Of course, getting from here to there is another story. Among those who favor a progressive new, new normal, moving in that direction will require imagination, engagement, and new political alliances to inject authentic democratic principles and practices into the neoliberal new normal "structural realities" we have called attention to in this book—institutional

arrangements that now dominate our economic, political, and cultural arenas. It will also require compromises, including interim, and perhaps modest, economic, political, and cultural reforms that can serve as platforms for later, more substantive institutional transformations that would sharply reduce current inequalities in a future, yet-to-be-fully-envisioned, progressive new, new normal.

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Chapter 20

Manufacturing Consent

Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky

It is our view that, among their other functions, the media serve, and propagandize on behalf of, the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. The representatives of these interests have important agendas and principles that they want to advance, and they are well positioned to shape and constrain media policy. This is normally not accomplished by crude intervention, but by the selection of right-thinking personnel and by the editors' and working journalists' internalization of priorities and definitions of newsworthiness that conform to the institution's policy.

Structural factors are those such as ownership and control, dependence on other major funding sources (notably, advertisers), and mutual interests and relationships between the media and those who make the news and have the power to define it and explain what it means. The propaganda model also incorporates other closely related factors such as the ability to complain about the media's treatment of news (that is, produce "flak"), to provide "experts" to confirm the official slant on the news, and to fix the basic principles and ideologies that are taken for granted by media personnel and the elite, but are often resisted by the general population.[1] In our view, the same underlying power sources that own the media and fund them as advertisers, that serve as primary definers of the news, and that produce flak and proper-thinking experts, also play a key role in fixing basic principles and the dominant ideologies. We believe that what journalists do, what they see as newsworthy, and what they take for granted as premises of their work are frequently well explained by the incentives, pressures, and constraints incorporated into such a structural analysis.

These structural factors that dominate media operations are not all-controlling and do not always produce simple and homogeneous results. It is well recognized, and may even be said to constitute a part of an institutional critique such as we present . . ., that the various parts of media organizations have some limited autonomy, that individual and professional values influence media work, that policy is imperfectly enforced, and that media policy itself may allow some measure of dissent and reporting that calls into question the accepted viewpoint. These considerations all work to assure some dissent and coverage of inconvenient facts.[2] The beauty of the system, however, is that such dissent and inconvenient information are kept within bounds and at the margins, so that while their presence shows that the system is not monolithic, they are not large enough to interfere unduly with the domination of the official agenda.

* * * *

Updating the Propaganda Model

The propaganda model . . . explains the broad sweep of the mainstream media's behavior and performance by their corporate character and integration into the political economy of the dominant economic system. For this reason, we focus heavily on the rise in scale of media

enterprise, the media's gradual centralization and concentration, the growth of media conglomerates that control many different kinds of media (motion picture studios, TV networks, cable channels, magazines, and book publishing houses), and the spread of the media across borders in a globalization process. We also noted the gradual displacement of family control by professional managers serving a wider array of owners and more closely subject to market discipline.

All of these trends, and greater competition for advertising across media boundaries, have continued and strengthened over the past dozen years, making for an intensified bottom-line orientation. Thus, centralization of the media in a shrinking number of very large firms has accelerated, virtually unopposed by Republican and Democratic administrations and regulatory authority.

Since 1990, a wave of massive deals and rapid globalization have left the media industries further centralized in nine transnational conglomerates—Disney, AOL Time Warner, Viacom (owner of CBS), News Corporation, Bertelsmann, General Electric (owner of NBC), Sony, AT&T–Liberty Media, and Vivendi Universal. These giants own all the world's major film studios, TV networks, and music companies, and a sizable fraction of the most important cable channels, cable systems, magazines, major-market TV stations, and book publishers. The largest, the recently merged AOL Time Warner, has integrated the leading Internet portal into the traditional media system. Another fifteen firms round out the system, meaning that two dozen firms control nearly the entirety of media experienced by most U.S. citizens. [Ben] Bagdikian concludes that "it is the overwhelming collective power of these firms, with their corporate interlocks and unified cultural and political values, that raises troubling questions about the individual's role in the American democracy."[3]

Important branches of the media such as movies and books have had substantial global markets for many years, but only in the past two decades has a global media system come into being that is having major effects on national media systems, culture, and politics.[4] It has been fueled by the globalization of business more generally, the associated rapid growth of global advertising, and improved communications technology that has facilitated cross-border operations and control. It has also been helped along by government policy and the consolidation of neoliberal ideology. The United States and other Western governments have pressed the interests of their home-country firms eager to expand abroad, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank have done the same, striving with considerable success to enlarge transnational corporate access to media markets across the globe. Neoliberal ideology has provided the intellectual rationale for policies that have opened up the ownership of broadcasting stations and cable and satellite systems to private transnational investors.

The culture and ideology fostered in this globalization process relate largely to "lifestyle" themes and goods and their acquisition; and they tend to weaken any sense of community helpful to civic life. Robert McChesney notes that "the hallmark of the global media system is its relentless, ubiquitous commercialism."[5] Shopping channels, "infomercials," and product placement are booming in the global media system. McChesney adds that "it should come as no surprise that account after account in the late 1990s documents the fascination, even the obsession, of the world's middle class youth with consumer brands and products."[6] The global media's "news" attention in recent years, aside from reporting on crusades such as "Operation Allied Force" (the NATO war against Yugoslavia) and on national elections, has been inordinately directed to sensationalism, as in their obsessive focus on the O. J. Simpson trial, the Lewinsky scandal, and the deaths of two of the West's supercelebrities, Princess Diana and John F. Kennedy, Jr.

Globalization, along with deregulation and national budgetary pressures, has also helped reduce the importance of noncommercial media in country after country. This has been especially important in Europe and Asia, where public broadcasting systems were dominant (in contrast with the United States and Latin America). The financial pressures on public broadcasters has forced them to shrink or emulate the commercial systems in fund-raising and programming, and some have been fully commercialized by policy change or privatization. The global balance of power has shifted decisively toward commercial systems. James Ledbetter points out that in the United States, under incessant right-wing political pressure and financial stringency, "the 90s have seen a tidal wave of commercialism overtake public broadcasting," with public broadcasters "rushing as fast as they can to merge their services with those offered by commercial networks."[7] And in the process of what Ledbetter calls the "malling" of public broadcasting, its already modest differences from the commercial networks have almost disappeared. Most important, in their programming "they share either the avoidance or the defanging of contemporary political controversy, the kind that would bring trouble from powerful patrons."[8]

Some argue that the Internet and the new communications technologies are breaking the corporate stranglehold on journalism and opening an unprecedented era of interactive democratic media. And it is true and important that the Internet has increased the efficiency and scope of individual and group networking. This has enabled people to escape the mainstream media's constraints in many and diverse cases. Japanese women have been able to tap newly created Web sites devoted to their problems, where they can talk and share experiences and information with their peers and obtain expert advice on business, financial, and personal matters.[9] Chiapas resisters against abuse by the Mexican army and government were able to mobilize an international support base in 1995 to help them publicize their grievances and put pressure on the Mexican government to change its policies in the region.[10] The enlarged ability of Bolivian peasants protesting against World Bank privatization programs and user fees for water in 2000, and Indonesian students taking to the streets against the Suharto dictatorship in Indonesia in 1998, to communicate through the Internet produced a level of publicity and global attention that had important consequences: Bechtel Corporation, owner of the newly privatized water system in Bolivia that had quickly doubled water rates, backed off and the privatization sale was rescinded; the protests and associated publicity, along with the 1998 financial crisis, helped drive Suharto from office.[11]

Broader protest movements have also benefited from Internet-based communication. When the leading members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) attempted in 1998 to push through in secret a Multilateral Agreement on Investment that would have protected further the rights of international investors as against the rights of democratic bodies within states, the Internet was extremely valuable in alerting opposition forces to the threat and helping mobilize an opposition that prevented acceptance of this agreement.[12] Similarly, in the protest actions against the WTO meetings in Seattle in November 1999 and the IMF and World Bank annual gatherings in Washington, D.C., in April 2000, communication via the Internet played an important role both in organizing the protests and in disseminating information on the events themselves that countered the mainstream media's hostile portrayal of these protests.[13]

However, although the Internet has been a valuable addition to the communications arsenal of dissidents and protesters, it has limitations as a critical tool. For one thing, those whose information needs are most acute are not well served by the Internet—many lack access, its databases are not designed to meet their needs, and the use of databases (and effective use of the Internet in general) presupposed knowledge and organization. The Internet is not an instrument of mass communication for those lacking brand names, an already

existing large audience, and/or large resources. Only sizable commercial organizations have been able to make large numbers aware of the existence of their Internet offerings. The privatization of the Internet's hardware, the rapid commercialization and concentration of Internet portals and servers and their integration into non-Internet conglomerates—the AOL–Time Warner merger was a giant step in that direction—and the private and concentrated control of the new broadband technology, together threaten to limit any future prospects of the Internet as a democratic media vehicle.

The past few years have witnessed a rapid penetration of the Internet by the leading newspapers and media conglomerates, all fearful of being outflanked by small pioneer users of the new technology, and willing (and able) to accept losses for years while testing out these new waters. Anxious to reduce these losses, however, and with advertisers leery of the value of spending in a medium characterized by excessive audience control and rapid surfing, the large media entrants into the Internet have gravitated to making familiar compromises—more attention to selling goods, cutting back on news, and providing features immediately attractive to audiences and advertisers. The *Boston Globe* (a subsidiary of the *New York Times*) and the *Washington Post* are offering e-commerce goods and services; and Ledbetter notes that "it's troubling that none of the newspaper portals feels that quality journalism is at the center of its strategy . . . because journalism doesn't help you sell things."[14] Former *New York Times* editor Max Frankel says that the more newspapers pursue Internet audiences, "the more will sex, sports, violence, and comedy appear on their menus, slighting, if not altogether ignoring, the news of foreign wars or welfare reform."[15]

New technologies are mainly introduced to meet corporate needs, and those of recent years have permitted media firms to shrink staff even as they achieve greater outputs, and they have made possible global distribution systems that reduce the number of media entities. The audience "interaction" facilitated by advancing interactive capabilities mainly help audience members to shop, but they also allow media firms to collect detailed information on their audiences, and thus to fine-tune program features and ads to individual characteristics as well as to sell by a click during programs. Along with reducing privacy, this should intensify commercialization.

In short, the changes in politics and communication over the past dozen years have tended on balance to enhance the applicability of the propaganda model. The increase in corporate power and global reach, the mergers and further centralization of the media, and the decline of public broadcasting, have made bottom-line considerations more influential both in the United States and abroad. The competition for advertising has become more intense and the boundaries between editorial and advertising departments have weakened further. Newsrooms have been more thoroughly incorporated into transnational corporate empires, with budget cuts and a further diminution of management enthusiasm for investigative journalism that would challenge the structures of power.

Over the past dozen years, sourcing and flak have also strengthened as mechanisms of elite influence. Media centralization and the reduction in the resources devoted to journalism have made the media more dependent than ever on the primary definers who both make the news and subsidize the media by providing accessible and cheap copy. They now have greater leverage over the media, and the public relations firms working for these and other powerful interests also bulk larger as media sources. . . . Studies of news sources reveal that a significant proportion of news originates in public relations releases.[16] There are, by one count, 20,000 more public relations agents working to doctor the news today than there are journalists writing it.[17]

The force of anti-communist ideology has possibly weakened with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the virtual disappearance of socialist movements across the globe, but this is easily

offset by the greater ideological force of the belief in the "miracle of the market" (Reagan). The triumph of capitalism and the increasing power of those with an interest in privatization and market rule have strengthened the grip of market ideology, at least among the elite, so that regardless of evidence, markets are assumed to be benevolent and even democratic ("market populism" in Thomas Frank's phrase) and nonmarket mechanisms are suspect, although exceptions are allowed when private firms need subsidies, bailouts, and government help in doing business abroad. When the Soviet economy stagnated in the 1980s, it was attributed to the absence of markets; when capitalist Russia disintegrated in the 1990s, this was blamed not on the now ruling market but on politicians' and workers' failure to let markets work their magic.[18] Journalism has internalized this ideology. Adding it to the residual power of anticommunism in a world in which the global power of market institutions makes nonmarket options seem utopian gives us an ideological package of immense strength.

These changes, which have strengthened the applicability of the propaganda model, have seriously weakened the "public sphere," which refers to the array of places and forums in which matters important to a democratic community are debated and information relevant to intelligent citizen participation is provided. The steady advance, and cultural power, of marketing and advertising has caused "the displacement of a political public sphere by a depoliticized consumer culture."[19] And it has had the effect of creating a world of virtual communities built by advertisers and based on demographics and taste differences of consumers. These consumption- and style-based clusters are at odds with physical communities that share a social life and common concerns and which participate in a democratic order.[20] These virtual communities are organized to buy and sell goods, not to create or service a public sphere.

Advertisers don't like the public sphere, where audiences are relatively small, upsetting controversy takes place, and the settings are not ideal for selling goods. Their preference for entertainment underlies the gradual erosion of the public sphere under systems of commercial media, well exemplified in the history of broadcasting in the United States over the past seventy-five years.[21] But entertainment has the merit not only of being better suited to helping sell goods; it is an effective vehicle for hidden ideological messages.[22] Furthermore, in a system of high and growing inequality, entertainment is the contemporary equivalent of the Roman "games of the circus" that diverts the public from politics and generates a political apathy that is helpful to preservation of the status quo.

It would be a mistake to conclude from the fact that the public buys and watches the offerings of the increasingly commercialized media that the gradual erosion of the public sphere reflects the preferences and free choices of the public either as citizens or consumers. The citizenry was never given the opportunity to approve or disapprove the wholesale transfer of broadcasting rights to commercial interests back in 1934,[23] and the pledge made by those interests, and subsequently by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) itself, that public service offerings would never be buried in favor of the entertainment preferred by advertisers, was never fulfilled.[24] The public is not sovereign over the media—the owners and managers, seeking ads, decide what is to be offered, and the public must choose among these. People watch and read in good part on the basis of what is readily available and intensively promoted. Polls regularly show that the public would like more news, documentaries, and other information, and less sex, violence, and other entertainment, even as they do listen to and watch the latter. There is little reason to believe that they would not like to understand why they are working harder with stagnant or declining incomes, have inadequate medical care at high costs, and what is being done in their name all over the world. If they are not getting much information on these topics, the propaganda model can explain why: the sovereigns who control the media choose not to offer such material.

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Applications

In his book *Golden Rule,* political scientist Thomas Ferguson argues that where the major investors in political parties and elections agree on an issue, the parties will not compete on that issue, no matter how strongly the public might want an alternative. He contends that for ordinary voters to influence electoral choices they would have to have "strong channels that directly facilitate mass deliberation and expression."[25] These would include unions and other intermediate organizations that might, through their collective power, cause the interests of ordinary voters to be given greater weight in the political system.

. . . For example, polls regularly indicate that, except in periods of war and intense war propaganda, the public wants a smaller defense budget and favors a spending shift from defense to education and other civil functions.[26] But because the major investors agree that a large defense budget is desirable, the two dominant parties compete only on whether the one or other is stinting on military expenditures, with both promising to enlarge it (as both George W. Bush and Al Gore did in the presidential election campaign of 2000). And the mainstream media do the same, limiting debate to the terms defined by the two parties and excluding deliberation and expression of the position that large cuts are desirable. The alternative presidential candidate, Ralph Nader, called for such cuts, but the media denied him a voice on the issues, some of them explicitly defending his exclusion from the presidential debates on the grounds that the options afforded by the two parties sufficed.[27]

The U.S. corporate community has favored an immense defense budget—currently more than five times the size of that of a steadily weakening Russia, the second biggest spender—because of the great benefits its members derive from military spending. These include weapons and other contracting business, direct and indirect subsidies in research,[28] and the role played by military power in supporting the global economic expansion in which many U.S. transnational corporations are active participants and beneficiaries. Business also benefits from the market-opening actions of trade agreements and from the supportive operations of the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF. But these trade agreements and the activities of the international financial institutions have generated controversy and political struggle, because while their benefits to business are clear, their costs are borne heavily by workers forced to compete in a global job market. Furthermore, globalization and trade agreements strengthen the political as well as the economic power of the corporate community, in part because they shift decision-making authority from democratic polities to bankers and technocrats who more reliably serve the transnational corporate interest. Here also, as in the case of defense-versus civilian-oriented budgets, polls show a sharp dichotomy between corporate and public preferences, with the latter generally hostile to the agreements and institutional arrangements favored by business.[29]

The propaganda model fits well the media's treatment of this range of issues. Consider, for example, their coverage of the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the subsequent Mexican financial crisis and meltdown of 1994–95. Polls taken before its enactment consistently showed substantial majorities opposed to NAFTA—and later to the bailout of investors in Mexican securities—but the elite in favor. Media editorials, news coverage, and selection of "experts" in opinion columns were heavily skewed toward the elite preference; their judgment was that the benefits of NAFTA were obvious, were agreed to by all qualified authorities, and that only demagogues and "special interests" were opposed.[30] The "special interests" who might be the "losers" included women, minorities, and a majority of the workforce.[31] The media dealt with the awkward fact that polls showed steady majority opposition to the agreement mainly by ignoring it, but occasionally they suggested that the public was uninformed and didn't recognize its own true interests.[32]

The effort of labor to influence the outcome of the NAFTA debates was sharply attacked in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post,* with no comparable criticism of corporate or governmental (U.S. or Mexican) lobbying and propaganda. And while labor was attacked for its alleged position on these issues, the press refused to allow the actual position to be expressed.[33]

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. . . [W]hen the growing global opposition to the policies of the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank led to mass protests at the WTO conference in Seattle in November and December 1999, and then at the annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank in Washington, D.C., in April 2000, media coverage of these events was derisive and hostile to the protesters and almost uniformly failed to deal with the substantive issues that drove the protests. The media portrayed the Seattle protesters as "all-purpose agitators" (*U.S. News & World Report*), "terminally aggrieved" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), simply "against world trade" (ABC News), and making "much ado about nothing" (CNN), but the bases of the protesters' grievances were almost entirely unexplored.[34] Similarly, in the case of the Washington, D.C., protests, the media repeatedly reported on activists' attire, looks, body odors, fadism, and claimed a lack of "anything that can coherently be called a cause" (Michael Kelly, journalist, *Washington Post*), and they continued their refusal to address issues.[35] There were many informed protesters with coherent agendas at Seattle and Washington—including reputable economists, social theorists, and veteran organizers from around the world[36]—but the media did not seek them out, preferring to stereotype antiglobalization activists as ignorant trouble-makers. On op-ed pages, there was a major imbalance hostile to the protestors. TV bias was at least as great, and often misleading on the facts. In his November 29, 1999, backgrounder on the WTO, Dan Rather explained that the organization had ruled on many environmental issues, implying that those rulings were protective of the environment when in fact they generally privileged trade rights over environmental needs.

Another notable feature of media reporting on both the Seattle and Washington, D.C., protests, and a throwback to their biased treatment of the protests of the Vietnam War era (1965–75),[37] was their exaggeration of protester violence, their downplaying of police provocations and violence, and their complaisance at illegal police tactics designed to limit all protestor actions, peaceable or otherwise.[38] Although the Seattle police resorted to force and used chemical agents against many nonviolent protesters well before a handful of individuals began breaking windows, both then and later the media reversed this chronology, stating that the police violence was a response to protester violence. In fact, the vandals were largely ignored by the police, while peaceful protesters were targeted for beatings, tear gas, torture with pepper spray, and arrest.[39] One *New York Times* article went so far as to claim that the Seattle protesters had thrown excrement, rocks, and Molotov cocktails at delegates and police officers; the *Times* later issued a correction acknowledging that these claims were false.[40] Dan Rather, who had falsely alleged that the protesters had "brought on today's crackdown" at Seattle, later suggested that the Washington protesters were possibly "hoping for a replay of last year's violence in Seattle," setting this off against "those charged with keeping the peace" who "have other ideas."[41]

In their eighty-seven-page report, *Out of Control: Seattle's Flawed Response to Protests Against the World Trade Organization,* the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) stated that "demonstrators [in Seattle] were overwhelmingly peaceful. Not so the police." The response of the Seattle police to the protests was characterized by "draconian" violations of civil liberties, including widespread use of "chemical weapons, rubber bullets and clubs against peaceful protesters and bystanders alike." But NBC, ABC, CBS, CNN, and the *New*

York Times and *Washington Post* all ignored the release of the ACLU's findings, which ran counter to their own uniformly pro-police and anti-protester line.

The media's reversal of chronology and inflation of the threat of activist violence, and their low-keyed treatment of numerous illegal police actions designed to instill fear in those wanting to protest peaceably,[42] provided the enabling ground for both police violence and serious restrictions on free speech. . . .

Notes

1. On a number of issues, such as trade agreements, health care, and the appropriate size of the military budget, there is a sharp division between media personnel and the elite on the one hand and the general population on the other hand.
2. This was even true in the Soviet Union, where the media's disclosure of inconvenient facts on the Afghan war caused the Soviet defense minister to denounce the press as unpatriotic; see Bill Keller, "Soviet Official Says Press Harms Army," *New York Times,* January 21, 1988.
3. Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly,* 6th ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000), p. xxi.
4. Edward S. Herman and Robert McChesney, *The Global Media* (London: Cassell, 1997).
5. Robert McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), p. 108.
6. Ibid., p. 109.
7. James Ledbetter, "Public Broadcasting Sells; (Out?)," *The Nation,* December 1, 1997.
8. Ibid.
9. Stephanie Strom, "Japanese Sites for Women Aim for Empowerment," *New York Times,* December 25, 2000.
10. Mark Fineman, "Military Can't Outflank Rebels in War of Words," *Los Angeles Times,* February 21, 1995; Leonard Doyle, "Rebels Try to Advance via Internet," *The Independent,* March 7, 1995.
11. Jim Shultz, "Bolivia's Water War Victory," *Earth Island Journal,* September 22, 2000; "Bolivia—The Last Word," April 13, 2000, *JShultz@democracyctr.org*; "How the Internet Helped Activists," *Straits Times* (Singapore), May 25, 1998; Marshall Clark, "Cleansing the Earth," *Inside Indonesia* (October-December 1998).
12. Madelaine Drohan, "How the Net Killed the MAI," *Globe and Mail,* April 29, 1998.
13. Kayte Van Scoy, "How Green Was My Silicon Valley," *PC/Computing,* March 1, 2000; Keith Perine, "Power to the (Web-Enabled) People," *Industry Standard,* April 10, 2000.
14. James Ledbetter, "Some Pitfalls in Portals," *Columbia Journalism Review* (November–December 1999).
15. Quoted in ibid.
16. Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk out of Democracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You!* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995); Stuart Ewen, *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic Books, 1996).
17. Mark Dowie, "Introduction," Stauber and Rampton, *Toxic Sludge*.
18. See Stephen Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Post-Communist Russia* (New York: Norton, 2000). See also Thomas Frank, *One Market Under God* (New York: Doubleday, 2000).
19. Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, *Times of the Technoculture* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 127.
20. Patricia Aufderheide, "Journalism and Public Life Seen Through the 'Net,' " in Aufderheide, *The Daily Planet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Joseph Turow, *Breaking Up America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).
21. Herman and McChesney, *Global Media,* chapter 5.
22. On the ideological messages borne in commercials, see Erik Barnouw, *The Sponsor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), part 2, chapter 1.
23. See Robert McChesney, *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy* (New York: Oxford, 1993).
24. See Edward S. Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media,* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 32–33.
25. Thomas Ferguson, *Golden Rule* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 28–29.
26. For a major study, see Steven Kull, "Americans on Defense Spending: A Study of U.S. Public Attitudes," *Report of Findings,* Center for Study of Public Attitudes, January 19, 1996. On public opposition to excessive defense spending even during the Reagan era, see Thomas Ferguson and Joel Rogers, *Right Turn* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1986), pp. 19–24.

27. The two major parties offer voters "a clear-cut choice," so there is "no driving logic for a third-party candidacy this year," according to the editors of the *New York Times*: "Mr. Nader's Misguided Crusade," June 10, 2000.
28. Especially after World War II, the military budget, and therefore the taxpayer, financed a very large fraction of the basic science that underpinned advances in the aircraft, computer, and electronics industries, the Internet economy, most of the biotech industry, and many others.
29. On the public opposition to the NAFTA agreement, see Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media,* pp. 185–86. A *Business Week*/Harris poll in early 2000 revealed that only 10 percent of those polled called themselves "free traders"; 51 percent called themselves "fair traders" and 37 percent "protectionists." "Harris Poll: Globalization: What Americans Are Worried About," *Business Week,* April 24, 2000.
30. For more extended accounts, see Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media,* chapter 14; Thea Lee, "False Prophets: The Selling of NAFTA," Briefing Paper, Economic Policy Institute, 1995; John McArthur, *The Selling of "Free Trade"* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000).
31. Thomas Lueck, "The Free Trade Accord: The New York Region," *New York Times,* November 18, 1993.
32. Editorial, "NAFTA's True Importance," *New York Times,* November 14, 1993.
33. On the refusal of the administration to allow any labor inputs in arriving at the NAFTA agreement, contrary to law, and the media's disinterest in this as well as any other undemocratic features of the creation of this and other trade agreements, see Noam Chomsky, *World Orders Old and New* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 164–78.
34. Citations from Seth Ackerman, "Prattle in Seattle: WTO coverage Misrepresented Issues, Protests," *EXTRA!* (January–February 2000), pp. 13–17.
35. Rachel Coen, "For Press, Magenta Hair and Nose Rings Defined Protests," *EXTRA!* (July–August 2000). An exception at the time of the Washington meetings and protests was Eric Pooley's "IMF: Dr. Death?" *Time,* April 24, 2000.
36. See Walden Bello, "Why Reform of the WTO Is the Wrong Agenda" (Global Exchange; 2000).
37. Edward P. Morgan, "From Virtual Community to Virtual History: Mass Media and the American Antiwar Movement in the 1960s." *Radical History Review* (Fall 2000); Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World Is Watching* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
38. Rachel Coen, "Whitewash in Washington: Media Provide Cover as Police Militarizes D.C.," *EXTRA!* (July–August 2000); Ackerman, "Prattle in Seattle"; Neil deMause, "Pepper Spray Gets in Their Eyes: Media Missed Militarization of Police Work in Seattle," *EXTRA!* (March–April 2000).
39. Coen, Ackerman, and deMause items cited in note 38.
40. Nichole Christian, "Police Brace for Protests in Windsor and Detroit," *New York Times,* June 3, 2000.
41. *CBS Evening News* Report, April 6, 2000.
42. Zachary Wolfe, National Lawyers Guild legal observer coordinator, concluded that "police sought to create an atmosphere of palpable fear," and that anyone even trying to hear dissident views ran a risk of police violence "just for being in the area where speech was taking place." Quote in Coen, "Whitewash in Washington."

Chapter 21

Still Manufacturing Consent

The Propaganda Model at Thirty

Edward S. Herman

The propaganda model (PM) is the theoretical core of *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media,* the book that Noam Chomsky and I published in 1988. We updated the work with a new introduction in 2002 and then with an afterword in 2008, but we left the rest of the book intact, comprising the presentation of the model (chapter 1), five chapters with lengthy case studies, and three appendices. It has held up quite well in its applicability, as illustrated by the additions in 2002 and 2008, and in the following updates.

The unique feature of the PM is that it offers a radical analysis and critique of the dominant, mainly commercial and advertising-based, mainstream media (MSM), locating their regular behavior and performance in their elite-dominated corporate structures and relationships, not in journalists' news-gathering practices or any supposed role as an independent watchdog serving the general public interest. The model was thus power-based, finding behavior and performance to originate from five sources related to institutional power. These five sources are (1) the ownership and profit orientation of the control group; (2) the impact of financial dependence on advertising and advertisers; (3) the sourcing of news, with power accruing to dominant sources like the Pentagon, the State Department, or Apple's headquarters, to which the media gravitate for credible and low-cost news; (4) flak, the negative feedback which is most important and influential when coming from agents of power; and (5) ideology, which also derives from individuals and institutions with economic or political power. In the 1988 edition we named "anticommunism" as the most relevant ideology. In later editions we added "free market ideology" while acknowledging that there was some variability in this factor; e.g., the occasional prioritizing of "antiterrorism."

We argued that the five elements in the model serve as filters, with news flows depending on the extent to which potential news events attract, and pass muster with, the underlying power sources that constitute the filters. For example, in a chapter titled "Worthy and Unworthy Victims," we showed that the state murder of a priest in Communist Poland in 1984 was very attractive to the media and faced no filter obstacle. By contrast, the murders of one hundred religious workers in US client states in Latin America in the years after World War II, including eight who were US citizens, were unattractive, as attention given to these murders interfered with US policy support for the killer regimes, hence their failure to make it through the filters. The filtering process is built into the media structures and requires no top-down orders or conspiracy.

We found it very useful to make comparisons like that of the "worthy" and "unworthy" victims in Poland and Latin America because of the clarity with which they demonstrate systematic bias. In our chapter on the media's treatment of Third World elections, we showed that the MSM were able to approve US-supported elections in El Salvador, while finding Nicaragua's US-disapproved election a sham, by using different criteria and focusing on different kinds of facts, thereby serving a clear but completely misleading propaganda function.

This same kind of deceptive double standard has been applied in the MSM's designation of cases of alleged "aggression" and "genocide." They have used the word "aggression" frequently in discussing Russia's casualty-free takeover of Crimea in 2014, but have not been able to bring themselves to use it at all in dealing with the casualty-rich US invasion and occupation of Iraq that began in 2003. Similarly, the word "genocide" was used lavishly in the MSM to describe Bosnian Serb killings of a claimed eight thousand Bosnian Muslim "men and boys" in the "Srebrenica massacre" of July 1995, but the deaths of an estimated five hundred thousand children resulting from the US-sponsored "sanctions of mass destruction" applied to Iraq in the years 1990–2003 were never called genocide in the US MSM.[1] The Srebrenica deaths were carried out by a group targeted by the US and hence fitted the category of "worthy victims"; the Iraqi children's deaths were inflicted by this country's actions, were declared "worth it" on national TV in 1996 by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and the victims were therefore treated as unworthy in the MSM (i.e., with silence).

Manufacturing Consent and the Propaganda Model were not welcomed and treated kindly by the MSM, or by most of the academic specialists on the media and communications. This was to be expected, and we predicted that the book and model would be mainly either ignored or treated harshly. After all, it is a radical analysis and critique that traces poor media performance to media structures and relationships that won't be correctable by exhortation or superficial reforms. This makes mainstream participants and liberal critics, who find the system essentially sound even if needing a little tweaking, uncomfortable and hostile.

Much of the criticism of the PM has been extremely superficial and has failed to come to grips with its actual focus and claims. It is a framework of analysis that identifies major forces affecting media behavior and performance; it is not a model of effects, although media behavior and performance are surely likely to influence public opinion and actions (i.e., have effects). But these effects may vary widely, and even strenuous propaganda campaigns may fail, or at least fall short of the campaign managers' aims. We recognized this and pointed out that divisions among elites as well as the level of public knowledge and interest in an issue would impact public opinion. We did note, however, that in which elites were unified and felt strongly about an issue, the MSM would also present a united front, although even in this case media effects might be limited. This has been true, for example, in the case of trade-investment-rule campaigns such as those for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993–1994 and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) more recently, where the strong pro-NAFTA/TPP position of the corporate elite and MSM failed to produce polling majorities for these legislative proposals.

But even in these cases where virtually unified MSM-supported propaganda campaigns failed to produce support from a majority of the public, they may have reduced the size and vigor of public opposition and helped make these proposals more viable. This was also true in the case of the wars in Central America carried out during the Reagan years (1980–1988). Polls showed that the public did not support these wars, but the Reagan administration pursued them relentlessly, supporting them with a strong covert propaganda campaign plus, of course, a flood of ordinary propaganda (selectively and sometimes literally fake news).[2] They also attacked dissident media and journalists. In one important case, after Raymond Bonner of the *New York Times* accurately reported on a major massacre in El Salvador by US-trained soldiers, attacks by the *Wall Street Journal* on Bonner led to his being removed from his post.[3] With Bonner out of the way, the *Times* resumed its usual role as a dispenser of the official line on Central America.

In *Manufacturing Consent*'s chapter on Third World election coverage, we tabulated how, in reporting on the US-sponsored El Salvador election of 1984, the *Times* simply ignored all the matters bearing on fundamental electoral conditions, including freedom of speech

and press, organizational freedom, and the absence of state terror—the type of democratic safeguards the military-dominated government actively opposed. By contrast, we showed how, in reporting Nicaragua's 1984 election, which the Reaganites wanted to discredit, the *New York Times* attended to each of these electoral conditions as much as possible (and with suitable misrepresentations). In a genuinely Orwellian process, although the basic electoral conditions in 1984 were far more favorable in Nicaragua than in El Salvador, with the help of the newspaper's thoroughgoing news bias, the editors felt able to conclude that the Nicaraguan election was "a sham" whereas the one in El Salvador was legitimate. We noted also that the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) sent an experienced observer team to Nicaragua in 1984, which produced a report with a depth unmatched by any other news or foreign observer analysis of the election. The report found that the Nicaraguan election was "a model of probity and fairness" by Latin American standards. Needless to say, the *New York Times* failed to mention the LASA report, but then no other major media source picked it up either.

. . . the PM works well in the numerous cases in which we can compare media treatment of similar events which are differently regarded by a powerful agent—e.g., "worthy" and "unworthy" victims, the Reagan-era elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua, and the Russian elections in 1996 (the Yeltsin era) and 2012 (the Putin era) as seen by US officials.[4] The PM also works well where we can see conflicts of interest between important parties, like governments and corporations wishing to carry out certain policies despite public interest groups or the broad public remaining skeptical of, or hostile to, such policies. This was the case with struggles over NAFTA and TPP, in which the MSM's alignment with the government and pro-NAFTA and pro-TPP forces was impressive.[5] The same has been true of the struggle between the chemical industry and public health spokespersons over the regulation of chemicals, "junk science" on chemicals, and "scares" about chemical threats. The chemical industry has wanted freedom of action and minimal regulation, whereas many public health experts have sought—unsuccessfully—the installation of a "precautionary principle" rule that would require proof of safety before approval of new chemicals. The MSM have never pressed for precaution, have underplayed the environmental threat of weak regulation, have derided "scares" that were real, and have allowed the term "junk science" to be applied to critics of the chemical industry rather than to the industry itself, where it belongs.[6]

What is the status of the PM thirty years after publication? We can answer this by considering, first, the structural changes that have taken place since 1988 and their impact on the relevance of the PM; and, second, by testing the model in application to the contemporary performance of the MSM.

The main structural change that has affected the MSM has been the growth of the Internet, with a rapid concentration process there and a huge drain of advertising revenue from the legacy media to the leading firms providing search information access and social media, i.e., Google, Facebook, Yahoo, Microsoft, and Twitter.[7] Newspapers have been particularly hard hit, with a 60 percent drop in the workforce from 1990 to 2016,[8] and a precipitous drop in advertising revenue from $65.8 billion in 2000 to $18 billion in 2014.[9] As newspapers' advertising revenues have collapsed, Google and Facebook have experienced spectacular windfalls: In 2015, for example, Google and Facebook earned an estimated $30 billion and $8 billion, respectively, in digital advertising revenues.[10] Google's total revenues grew from $1.5 billion in 2003 to $74.5 billion in 2015.[11] By 2016, Alphabet, Google's holding company, was the largest media company in the world, with revenues 166 percent greater than Walt Disney's, its nearest rival.[12]

Although Internet optimists had forecast that we were entering a new era of media democratization, with thousands, or millions, of bloggers and other news sources, it turns out that

the power and pull of advertising, the networking effect of increasing size and outreach, and government policies, have rapidly led to levels of concentration in communication on Internet sites greater than those attained earlier by the legacy media—with Google attaining an 88 percent market share in online searches and search advertising and Facebook a 77 percent market share in mobile social media.[13] These two giants have used micro-technology to identify and sell to advertisers full dossiers on the personal habits, relationships, and tastes of the vast number of people using Google's powerful search engine and posting their "likes" along with other personal information on Facebook.[14]

These Internet giants are in the surveillance-marketing ("spying and selling") business, not in the business of creating news or other content. But users of Google and especially Facebook want news, so Facebook has become a platform through which news created elsewhere flows and is consumed and redirected. Postings on Facebook have become a major news source for ordinary Facebook users and for other online services like Huffington Post and BuzzFeed, and Facebook officials, partly in response to charges of allowing and passing along "fake news," have been driven to manage the flow of news. This has included developing and utilizing algorithms that can automatically prune out materials that violate moral or other standards. But Facebook officials have also engaged in negotiations with reputable news sources that seek access to the Facebook platform and want to participate in Facebook's rulemaking on access. As Jonathan Taplin asks, "How long before Facebook becomes the controlling force in the online journalism business?"[15]

How did this structural transformation affect the workings of the filters identified by the PM? The for-profit sector of the media has certainly not diminished in relative size, and the revenue losses of the legacy media have intensified the MSM's search for advertising and made for greater dependence on powerful primary sources for news. The desire to avoid flak from the powerful and the unwillingness to challenge prevailing ideologies has also probably risen. The new Internet giants—not themselves in the journalism business but with significant power over news choices via their increasing role as news platforms—make for considerable uncertainty. They are likely to reflect in part the news choices determined by actual journalists, but the latter may be influenced by what produces traffic and advertising on the large new platforms.

The news performance of the MSM in recent decades has strongly confirmed the continued applicability of the PM. The Iraq War itself provides a plethora of evidence supportive of the PM. The intense war propaganda of the Bush administration succeeded in convincing a majority of US citizens that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but even as late as February 2003 (the attack began on March 20) a majority of the US public wanted further investigations by the UN inspection teams before the launch of any attack.[16] On February 15 and 16, 2003, there were mass antiwar protests with probably over one million people on the streets in dozens of US cities (and many millions in six hundred cities globally), a unique event since a war had yet to begin. But this massive demonstration of public opposition hardly moved the war-makers, and the MSM did not give the protests sympathetic coverage or diminish their own service as war facilitators.

The Bush administration aimed at regime change in Iraq. But as this was too conspicuous a violation of the UN Charter and international law, the officially declared aim was to remove Saddam Hussein's WMD. The Bush–Blair axis wanted to attack immediately, but a majority of the Security Council wanted to allow UN inspection teams to verify Bush's claims that Iraq possessed such weapons and, in the event that the weapons existed, to perhaps allow the inspection teams to remove them. Such inspections had, in fact, been in process for a decade. And there was already substantial evidence that such weapons had been entirely or almost entirely eliminated. Scott Ritter, a top inspector from 1991 to 1998,

claimed that 90–95 percent of those weapons had been "verifiably eliminated" and that the residual was old and unusable.[17] Even more important, Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law and long in charge of Iraq's weapons program, defected in 1995, and in information he supplied to the CIA he claimed that Saddam's entire stock of chemical and biological WMD had been destroyed.[18]

Furthermore, under UN auspices there were two inspection teams at work, a United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), headed by Hans Blix; and an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), headed by Mohamed ElBaradei. Both of these operations worked hard at inspections, found the Iraqi government quite cooperative, and continued to find nothing. This was exceedingly annoying to the Bush administration, which wanted a quick "favorable" finding and therefore assailed the inspectors' lack of speed and strove to discredit and bypass them. The MSM cooperated, treating the inspections as ineffective and largely ignoring their findings, thus helping set the stage for denying their authority and going to war.

The media's cooperation in this drive to war went far. There was the further demonization of Saddam Hussein and suppression of the news of his cooperation with inspections. Ignoring the credible negative findings from the on-the-scene inspectors, the MSM allowed the Bush team, their apologists, and their usually anonymous Iraqi sources to dominate the flow of purported information. Bush and company claimed that Iraq had an active nuclear weapons program as well as hidden chemical and biological weapons. The inspector chiefs denied this. The inspectors' evidence and Hussein Kamel's 1995 testimony had to be kept out of the public domain, and the MSM saw to this.

Bush, Cheney, and other officials had cited Kamel as authoritative, and in his notorious presentation to the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003, Secretary of State Colin Powell also cited Kamel as acknowledging Iraqi production of four tons of nerve gas, but he failed to mention that Kamel had said this had all been completely destroyed. Although the *Times* and other media had reported earlier on some of Hussein Kamel's evidence, his statement about destroyed WMD was suppressed except for one very late article published in *Newsweek* under the elusive title, "The Defector's Secrets."[19] Colin Powell's February 5 performance rested heavily on the claims of an Iraqi defector, Rafid Ahmed Alwan al-Janabi, also known as "Curveball," whose detailed claims of Iraq's biological warfare program were later admitted to have been entirely fraudulent. Curveball resided in Germany and the BND, Germany's Federal Intelligence Service, had warned US officials that his testimony was dubious. But his claims were obviously preferable to those of Hussein Kamel. The MSM treated Powell's extensively disinforming Security Council performance as compelling.

MSM news flowed from Bush administration leaders, CIA and Pentagon sources, and a steady stream of Iraqi defectors, many supplied to the media by Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi expatriate and head of the Iraqi National Congress. Chalabi's organization was given millions by the CIA, and he served the Bush program well.[20] Judith Miller, the principal *New York Times* reporter on the Iraq War campaign, acknowledged depending heavily on Chalabi and his supply of informants.[21] She wrote dozens of articles featured in the *Times,* sourced entirely from Bush officials and Iraqi defectors.

The coordination with the war-makers' propaganda needs was exemplary. Best known, and perhaps most revealing, was Miller's article, written with Michael Gordon, published on September 8, 2002, "Threats and Responses: The Iraqis; U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts."[22] The information was false. The aluminum tubes that Iraq was acquiring were not designed for bomb use, as was disclosed later with less fanfare: The article was based on a leak of classified information fed to the authors by Lewis Scooter Libby, Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff.[23] The same day Cheney cited Gordon

and Miller's article on *Meet the Press* in support of his claim that Saddam was aggressively seeking to enrich uranium, as evidenced by his buying aluminum tubes. Other Bush officials also quickly cited the same article as indication of the acute menace. This was an exemplary case of government officials using a cooperative media source for rapid propaganda service.

In its opinion columns also, the *New York Times* served the war party well. The *Times* not only paid no attention to the evidence of Scott Ritter, who had been a top UN Special Commission inspector and was outspoken on the errors and dangers of Bush's Iraq policy, it actually published an article in its *Magazine* devoted to discrediting him.[24] The *Times* much preferred Kenneth Pollack, author of the 2002 book, *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq,* who had four pro-war op-ed columns in the paper in 2002–2003. The editorial page supported Pollack's false claims that Iraq possessed WMD and pursued a nuclear weapons program.[25] In both its opinion columns and news reporting on Iraq, the "Newspaper of Record" transmitted fabricated propaganda claims flowing from the CIA, the Pentagon, and Ahmed Chalabi, an Iraqi funded by the CIA.

In sum, the performance of the *Times* and the MSM, before and during the invasion and occupation of Iraq, was as good a fit to the PM as any of the case studies presented in *Manufacturing Consent*. MSM coverage was built on Bush administration lies that were quickly exposed with the failed search for WMD. The *Times* and *Washington Post* both issued quasi-apologies for their performance in servicing the Iraq war-makers, but the responsible editors were not fired, and were almost immediately engaged in a similar performance on the next main target, Iran.

The Propaganda Model is as strong and applicable as it was thirty years ago. The structural conditions have, if anything, given it more salience, with greater media concentration but still more competition for advertising revenue, enhanced power and reach of advertisers, and little if any diminution in the effects of the other three filters. What is more, the performance of the MSM in treating the run-up to the Iraq War, the conflict with Iran, and Russia's alleged election "meddling" and "aggression" in Ukraine and Crimea, offer case studies of biases as dramatic as those offered in the 1988 edition of *Manufacturing Consent*. The Propaganda Model lives on.

Notes

1. There were few if any "boys" killed at Srebrenica; most of the eight thousand were soldiers killed in combat, not executed. See Edward S. Herman, ed., *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Context, Politics* (Evergreen Park, Illinois: Alphabet Soup, 2011).
2. One illustration of fake news: the Reagan administration claimed that Soviet MiGs were being imported into Nicaragua in the midst of their election preparations, a false and negative distraction from the election reality. See Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002), 137–39.
3. Raymond Bonner, *Weakness and Deceit: U.S. Policy and El Salvador* (New York: Times Books, 1984). See also Edward S. Herman, "The *Journal*'s War on the Media," in Herman, *The Myth of the Liberal Media: An Edward Herman Reader* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 111–13.
4. For analysis of media performance in the Yeltsin and Putin eras, see Edward S. Herman, "Fake News on Russia and Other Official Enemies: *The New York Times*, 1917–2017," *Monthly Review*, Vol. 69, No. 3 (July–August 2017): 98–112.
5. Edward S. Herman, "NAFTA, Mexican Meltdown, and the Propaganda System," in Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media*, 181–95.
6. Edward S. Herman, "Corporate Junk Science in the Media," in Herman, *Myth of the Liberal Media*, 231–56.
7. See "State of the News Media 2016," Pew Research Center, (June 15, 2016): 56; available for download at http://www.journalism.org/files/2016/06/State-of-the-News-Media-Report-2016-FINAL.pdf.

8. Roy Greenslade, "Almost 60% of US Newspaper Jobs Vanish in 26 Years," *Guardian,* (June 6, 2016). https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2016/jun/06/almost-60-of-us-news-paper-jobs-vanish-in-26-years.
9. Jonathan Taplin, *Move Fast and Break Things: How Facebook, Google, and Amazon Cornered Culture and Undermined Democracy* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2017), 7.
10. Mathew Ingram, "How Google and Facebook Have Taken Over the Digital Ad Industry," *Fortune*, (January 4, 2017). http://fortune.com/2017/01/04/google-facebook-ad-industry/.
11. Taplin, 7.
12. Lauren Johnson, "Google Now Controls 12 Percent of All Global Media Spend," *Adweek*, (May 26, 2016). http://www.adweek.com/digital/google-now-controls-12-percent-all-global-media-spend-171701/.
13. Taplin, 21.
14. See, for example, "Facebook Buys Sensitive User Data to Offer Marketers Targeted Advertising," story #23 in Chapter 1 of *Censored 2018*.
15. Taplin, 93.
16. E.g., "Americans on Iraq and the UN Inspections," World Public Opinion, (February 21, 2003). http://worldpublicopinion.net/americans-on-iraq-and-the-un-inspections/.
17. Scott Ritter and William Rivers Pitt, *War on Iraq: What Team Bush Doesn't Want You to Know* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2002), 28.
18. John Barry, "The Defector's Secrets," *Newsweek*. (March 2, 2003): http://www.newsweek.com/exclusive-defectors-secrets-132803.
19. Ibid.
20. E.g., Sewell Chan, "Ahmad Chalabi, Iraqi Politician Who Pushed for U.S. Invasion, Dies at 71," *New York Times.* (November 3, 2015). https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/04/world/middleeast/ahmad-chalabi-iraq-dead.html.
21. Miller acknowledged that Chalabi "has provided most of the front-page exclusives on WMD to our paper." Quoted in Howard Friel and Richard Falk, *The Record of the Paper: How the New York Times Misreports US Foreign Policy* (London: Verso, 2004), 11.
22. Michael R. Gordon and Judith Miller, "Threats and Responses; The Iraqis; U.S. Says Hussein Intensifies Quest for A-Bomb Parts," *New York Times*. (September 8, 2002): http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/08/world/threats-responses-iraqis-us-says-hussein-intensifies-quest-for-bomb-parts.html.
23. David E. Sanger and David Barstow, "Iraq Findings Leaked by Aide were Disputed," *New York Times*. (April 9, 2006). http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/09/washington/us/iraq-findings-leaked-by-aide-were-disputed.html.
24. Barry Bearak, "Scott Ritter's Iraq Complex," *New York Times Magazine*. (November 24, 2002). http://www.nytimes.com/2002/11/24/magazine/scott-ritter-s-iraq-complex.html.
25. For a good discussion of Pollack and his role in the *Times*'s war apologetics, see Friel and Falk, 42–50.

Chapter 22

Victim-Veterans and America's "Lost War Narrative"

The War in Vietnam Remembered

Jerry Lembcke

In January, 2017, the *New York Times* began a series of stories to commemorate the 50th anniversary of events of the war in Vietnam.[1] One of those stories ran on June 20, 2017. Written by veteran Bill Reynolds, the story recounted his experience as an infantryman in a harrowing battle at AP Bac in the Mekong Delta in 1967. Forty-seven Americans and 250 Viet Cong were killed in the daylong battle. In a later fight, Reynolds' unit lost five more men including his high school classmate Phil Ferro. "It was dangerous," recalled Reynolds, "but my tour ended and I came home through San Francisco's airport to throngs of hippies harassing me."[2]

Reynolds' article drew an unusually large number of comments posted online, 159. Of those, 48 or 30% focused on just 13 of the 1,500 words that he had written: "I came home through San Francisco's airport to throngs of hippies harassing me." Some of the commenters questioned the truth of Reynolds' coming-home story, but more of them condemned the hippies and protesters alleged to have mistreated him and other returning veterans.

Early in the chain of comments, John K. invoked the image of Vietnam veterans having been spat on, an image characterized by West Point professor Elizabeth Samet as "the archetype of the hostile homecoming." Rumors of that Vietnam-era hostility, she says, became the backstory that evoked the "thank you for your service" expression popularized after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, a way of saying to Gulf War veterans that they would be treated better than the Vietnam generation. The "thank yous" showered on troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan also functioned, Samet said, as a "mantra of atonement" for having sent people to fight a "bankrupt war" in Vietnam.[3]

The stories of Vietnam veterans defiled by activists also worked in the political culture to vilify the anti-war movement and even discredit the many veterans who had joined the cause to end the war when they returned. In later years, the stories fed a belief that the war had been lost due to lack of support and even subversion on the home front.[4] From the 1980s through the 2016 election, conservative politicians ran for office on the fuel and fumes of a conviction that radicals on campuses and liberals in Congress had cost the nation its victory in Vietnam.

The enduring effects of the angers and anxieties carried forward from the war in Vietnam warrant a new look at their historical origins and the circumstances that help explain their persistence. This chapter focuses on the stories of spat-upon veterans that form the most salient and persistent image in the American narrative of a defeat abroad that stemmed from alleged disloyalty and weakness at home.

Spat-on Veterans

Stories of spat on veterans broke into the American conversation in late 1990 as the country ramped up for the first Persian Gulf War. The classic spitting story is told by the veteran who deplaned at the San Francisco Airport and was met by spitting women and hippies or "male

long-hairs", some carrying placards reading "baby killer." Some of the story tellers say they were warned by military authorities on the plane to go immediately to the airport restroom and change into civilian clothes lest they be attacked by protesters. To make sure this scene did not repeat itself, we were told to rally around the men and women dispatched to the Gulf. Within weeks the nation was awash with yellow ribbons, symbols of support for troops, and by inference, the mission on which they had been sent.

The yellow ribbon campaign dovetailed neatly with two issues hanging-over from the Vietnam era about which the American people felt great emotion: the prisoner of war/missing in action (POW/MIA) issue and the issue of spat-upon veterans. The POW/MIA issue was a natural, but it was the image of veterans spat on that figured most prominently in the rhetoric of those supporting the Gulf War. In that image soldiers were the scapegoats against whom those who had opposed the war directed their hostility. Allegedly, members of the anti-war movement spat on soldiers just returned from Vietnam; the acts of spitting were said to have been accompanied by cries of "Baby Killer."

The Sociology of Myths and Legends

Research done since the Gulf War years has cast serious doubt on the validity of the stories. Most importantly, there was no evidence that such incidences happened and only a scant record of claims made at the time, the late 1960s and early 1970s, that such things were happening. There were, moreover, details in the stories that could not be true, such as returnees from Vietnam landing at civilian airports like San Francisco. The truth was that those planes landed at military airbases such as Travis in California where protesters could not have gotten near deplaning troops. It was also implausible that girls with pacifist leanings would spit on anyone as a form of political expression. It was also the case that stories of protester hostility toward veterans were incongruent with the historical record that activists had reached out and recruited veterans to the cause of ending the war, and that thousands of service personnel returned from Southeast Asia and joined the anti-war movement.

Additionally, the image of spat-on veterans displaced public memory of the war itself. Just as so many *New York Times* readers of Bill Reynolds' story reduced it to thirteen words about his homecoming, many Americans today know little about the war and yet seem to know with certainty that returning soldiers were spat on. For them, the war has been reduced to a homecoming story, the enemy some harassing hippies. The image of veterans made victims upon their return also clouded-over the historical fact that thousands of service members were politicized and empowered by their wartime experience. The consequence of that having been forgotten would be evinced years later when a new generation, oblivious to the political narrative of antiwar Vietnam veterans, sought identity within victim-veteran imagery provided by the mental health discourse of PTSD.

Most interesting to researchers was the similarity of spat-on veteran stories like these to those told after other lost wars including Germany after World War I and France after its loss of Indochina in 1954. In both cases, it was women who were alleged to have greeted returned veterans hostilely. The German women, some said to have had pistols tucked in their skirts, supposedly spat on the soldiers. The German scholar Klaus Theveleit examined the stories and judged them to be male fantasies, expressions of lost masculinity due to battlefront defeat. The German stories were an essential ingredient in the stab-in-the-back legend that put the blame for Germany's loss of the war on home-front betrayal—Jews, homosexuals, and the ill-discipline of civilian society. The French military blamed weak support at home for its loss. In both cases, backlashes against fifth-columnists and pacifism fueled

domestic repression and demands for rearmament and another go at war abroad: Germany into Poland and another World War, and France into Algeria.[5]

Scholars of myth and legend tell us that the origin of the stories has more to do with the time period in which they are conjured than the time when they supposedly occurred – thus the time gap. The stories of defiled German veterans found receptive ears in the economic hardships imposed by post-war settlements. Stories of spat-on Vietnam veterans begin to be told in the 1980s when the country is in the throes of economic upheaval and upset over the lost war in Vietnam. Shutdowns of the auto and steel plants and the collapse of the family-farm economy in the '80s devastated Middle America. Vietnam veterans were a particularly hard-hit demographic. Popular culture strummed the anger and anxieties of *those* hurts, connecting them to betrayal themes explaining the defeat in Vietnam.

In the 1978 film *Coming Home* a Marine officer returns to learn that his wife, played by Jane Fonda, has taken up with another man. In the 1987 film *Hamburger Hill,* the protagonist sergeant tells his men that hippies and protesters back home are shacked-up with their girlfriends and wives and pelting returning veterans with "dog shit"—except for the dog shit, we recognize that coming home scene as coming from Homer's *Odyssey*.

Throughout the '80s and '90s an array of POW/victim-veteran themed films portrayed veterans' abandonment and even sacrifice by political elites in Washington. Ronald Reagan, admittedly inspired by the betrayal themes of the *Rambo* series of films ran for office on the belief that domestic entitlement programs and a weakened will-to-war had resulted a military flaccidity and defeat in Vietnam. In mimicry of John Rambo's lines in the movie implying that we lost because somebody didn't let us win, Reagan promised that "next time we'll let you win."[6]

It was this imagery that primed the ideological pumps for the angst of Americans feeling "left behind" which politicians and pundits ply for votes and audiences going into the new-war era of the 1990s and twenty-first century. The link to the Persian Gulf War of 1990–91 was suggested by members of Congress interviewed for a story that appeared in *The New York Times* on September 16, 1990. The story was accompanied by photographs of Sen. John Kerry sitting in his office, paired with a photo of the boat he commanded in Vietnam, and Sen. John McCain in his office paired with a photo of him as a POW hospitalized in North Vietnam.

The story itself framed the linkage between the Vietnam War and the Gulf War in such a way that the treatment of soldiers and veterans was *the* issue. Rep. John Murtha, for example, who had served as a Marine in Vietnam, said that on a recent visit to Saudi Arabia "troops repeatedly asked [him] whether 'the folks back home' supported them." "The 'aura of Vietnam' hangs over these kids," the Pennsylvania Democrat said. "Their parents were in it. They've seen all these movies. They worry, they wonder."[7]

The "aura of Vietnam" in Vietnam in this story was not the loss of the war, not the massive destruction of Vietnam itself, not the death of 58,000 Americans and 2,000,000 Vietnamese, not any of the myriad other things the war was more evidently about that was at issue. The aura of Vietnam as framed in this news story was, as it was for the readers of Bill Reynolds' article, the level of support that soldiers and veterans had received from the American people. To make sure nobody missed the point, the *Times* bundled the package—Vietnam veterans, the Gulf War, and hostility for the anti-war movement—with reports from the Gulf like the following:

> One soldier asked that his name not be used and also asked that an officer step away to permit the soldier to speak freely to a reporter. . . . "When we deployed here, people cheered and waved flags," he [said]. "But if I go back home like the Vietnam vets did and somebody spits on me, I swear to God I'll kill them."[8]

The Yellow Ribbon Campaign

These sentiments were brought to the surface during the fall of 1990. Weeks of Gulf War buildup were then played upon by Operation Yellow Ribbon in December. Claiming the support of all five branches of the armed services, the campaign operated on three levels. One level involved the collection of items that Operation leaders claimed were needed by soldiers in the Gulf. Using the stationery of the Third Marine Division Association, Operation Eagle solicited donations of reading material, board games, videos, sports equipment, and personal items such as lip balm and sunglasses. The solicitation listed a "hotline" number for further information without revealing that the number belonged to the Defense Logistics Agency in the Department of Defense.

Additionally, Operation Eagle/Yellow Ribbon carried out a propaganda campaign in the public schools. The program sent Operation Eagle leaders and military personnel to schools and got students involved in writing letters to soldiers in the Gulf. Students who wrote letters were given red, white, and blue Operation Eagle hats.

The school campaign provided Operation Eagle enormous visibility and, through the thousands of children directly touched by military personnel who went into the schools, indirect access to the hearts and minds of thousands more adults. Most important, the political fallout from Operation Eagle's appearances in the schools created a pretext for attacks on the anti-war movement. When parents and interested citizens objected to Operation Eagle's self-evidently propagandistic project, the press and grassroots conservatives construed their objections as anti-soldier.

Operation Eagle's war against the anti-war movement was the third, and most important, level at which it operated. When a Worcester, Massachusetts mother objected to the presence of Operation Eagle in her son's school, the local press ridiculed her in an editorial. Two days later, the paper ran a large cartoon showing a soldier with an envelope addressed to "Any Soldier, Desert Shield," the generic address that Operation Eagle had been telling school children to use. The soldier was tipping the envelope so that a large amount of what looked like tiny scraps of paper were pouring out. The cartoon has him saying, "Some grade school kids from Worcester [MA] mailed us . . . CONFETTI?!" A second soldier is shown saying, "Nope . . . those are kids LETTERS . . . edited by some protest group."

Within days, the paper was flooded with letters that parroted the themes of soldiers, hostages, Vietnam, and the anti-war movement that the Bush Administration had so ably stirred together during the previous weeks. One writer said war opponents were causing him flashbacks in the 1960s. "I hope and pray," he said, "Gulf War veterans will never return to the unfriendly and unsupportive country my generation returned to." Another letter claimed that anti-war activists had broken the hearts of thousands of Vietnam veterans. Still another asked if the peace activists opposing the Gulf War were "the same people that spit on the GIs when they came home from Vietnam." A supporter of Operation Eagle, when asked why she was at a rally to protest the war, told an interviewer:

> The first reason, the first time I came out, the reason was, is, because of what happened to the Vietnam vets. I felt that they were treated so badly and they fought for their country and they were treated so bad that I tried to make up for it in this way . . .
>
> I heard *they* [motions to the peace vigil] were going to be here. And I didn't know anybody else was going to be here but I came down to protest the protesters. That's the only reason I came, was to protest the protesters. I want the boys over there to know that there *are* people over here who are behind them and they're not gonna have to come home ashamed of their uniform; they're not gonna have to be taking their uniform off at the airport so they can sneak into their own country and not be called murderers and everything.[9]

Across the country, the role played by Operation Eagle in Massachusetts was played by other affiliates of Operation Yellow Ribbon. One that drew national attention was in the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg where efforts to block an Operation Yellow Ribbon group from entering Dooley Elementary School drew a response from President Bush. That story, carried in the pages of major newspapers across the country, reinforced the feeling that the real line of conflict in the Gulf War was drawn between those who supported and those who opposed the troops.[10]

But the yellow ribbon was only a symbol. The "real" thing was the image of the Vietnam veteran abused by the anti-war movement. That image was invoked countless times during the Gulf War period, sometimes in news accounts intended to be sympathetic to the war protesters:

> Vietnam-era protests often were directed at the soldiers themselves, revealing an ugly streak of elitism at best; this year's demonstrators see the Gls as victims. "You won't see protesters spitting on soldiers as they come off the plane," predicted Greg Sommers, director of the Fayetteville, NC branch of Quaker House, a pacifist organization.[11]

The not infrequent invocation of the spat-upon veteran image by those who had been active opponents of the Vietnam War, and were now opposed to the Gulf War, may have been opportunism on the part of some. More likely though, the self-incriminating statements of anti-war activists testified to the hegemony that the image of the defiled Vietnam veteran had acquired through the medium of popular culture and the power of the news media to keep the image in the faces of the American people during the period of the Gulf War buildup.

Fighting the Vietnam Syndrome

The dispatch of troops to the Gulf was an exercise in what is sometimes called "armed propaganda," a way of persuading through action. A substantial component of the propaganda campaign was directed at the American people. Armed propaganda substitutes for reasoned, rational argument through its appeals to emotions. It communicates through a discourse of military symbolism, not words and logical propositions. Once the Bush administration had paralyzed the ends-means discourse, the armed propaganda technique enabled it to reduce public opinion on the war to the levels of emotion and symbolism. The image of the spat-upon veteran functioned during the Gulf War as a "perfecting myth."[12] Perfecting myths, explains Virginia Carmichael in her book *Framing History,* provide a justification for the world while simultaneously reinforcing the relationship between individuals and the state. They insure, she adds, "individuals' voluntary acquiescence to, support for, and daily investment in a specific history not of their choosing."[13]

By this reading, the Gulf War was a kind of necessary shock therapy to jolt the American people out of their reluctance to go war, a reluctance that, allegedly, was a hangover from the defeat in Vietnam. The Gulf War was to be a demonstration of military prowess so awesome that positive identification with it would be the only responsible option. Opposition to the war, by the same token, would look so hopeless that the few pathetic souls who dared would be automatically subjected to devastating scorn and belittlement.[14]

The Gulf War brought scholars to a new level of appreciation for the audacity of governmental power at the turn of the twenty-first century. As economist Andre Gunder Frank observed in his analysis of Gulf War propaganda, the capacity of today's high-tech news management to persuade a global population to act against its will makes fascist mind

control of the World War II era look like child's play. Frank's unmasking of what would have been termed brainwashing in another time in history, however, had little deterrent effect on the same technics of information control and image management when they were unleashed on behalf of new wars.[15]

Twenty-First Century Wars: Old Myth, New Rumors

The largest anti-war movement in American history emerged during the weeks leading up to the attack on Iraq in 2003. Capped by massive rallies in Washington, DC on January 18th and New York City on March 19th, the movement spanned generations and united fractious political interests to degrees that surprised participants and pundits alike. Since the bombing of Baghdad began on March 19th, opposition to the war remained high, with actions, impressive in size and exuberance, occurring on a nearly daily basis in cities and towns across the country.

Mustering for peace, however, was soon overshadowed by reports about growing numbers of people turning out for rallies and vigils to "support our troops." Taken at face value by the news media as sincerely motivated events about the welfare of the men and women sent abroad, anti-war activists nevertheless saw the counter-protests as thinly veiled political theater whose real purpose is to mobilize public sentiment for the war against Iraq. The *pro*-troop rhetoric, said activists, implied that they *didn't* support the men and women in uniform—a supposition girded by the myths and legends about home-betrayal that have bedeviled American political culture since the Vietnam War.

By the time the war in Iraq began, stories had surfaced in several states including North Carolina and Washington of servicemen being spat on, while in Vermont a National Guard sergeant was reportedly harassed and targeted by stone-throwing anti-war students. In Asheville, N.C. a local radio station used a reported spitting incident to stoke a rally for the troops without ever confirming that anyone in town was actually against them. A reporter for the city weekly newspaper investigated and found, well, nothing—no evidence of untoward behavior directed at soldiers. Debate about the war itself and the politics that got us there was all but displaced by the ersatz issue of who supports the troops. For some people the *real* war became the war at home and the enemy the anti-war movement.

The Beat Goes On

One might think that with the passage of time and the efforts to debunk the spitting stories as myth, their telling would be a past-tense phenomenon—the kind of stories "once told" that are now known to be folklore. But one would be wrong. The stories have become so ingrained in the American discourse about war and veterans that they can now be referenced matter-of-factly with no acknowledgement of their attenuated authenticity. Their migration from bar-stools to the higher cultural ground of literary trope has been assisted by mainstream organizations.

A 2014 issue of *AARP Magazine,* a publication of the American Association of Retired People, ran a story written by Gary Sinise, the actor who played Lieutenant Dan in the movie *Forest Gump* and detective Mac on *CSI*. Sinise recalled his brother-in-law Jack returning from Vietnam; Jack ducked into the airport's men's room to shed his uniform because "he'd heard the stories about returning soldiers being spit on." It was what happened "at home" during the war, wrote Sinise.[16]

The stories of maligned veterans are now salted into the biographies of a new generation of veterans. Navy *SEAL* Chris Kyle, wrote in his book *American Sniper*—the title also of the

film based on the book—of being derided in San Diego upon his deployment to Iraq. He recalled passing "a small group of protesters demonstrating against the war. They had signs about baby killers and whatever, protesting the troops going over to fight." In his blog, culture critic Michael McCaffrey challenged the veracity of several boasts made by Kyle and gave particular attention to the "baby killer" incident. It was, said McCaffrey, "at worst pure fantasy, at best a great embellishment."[17] A comment about my book *The Spitting Image* posted in 2016 at Amazon.com reads: "I'm another Vet that came home through California in my U.S. Army uniform . . . and I was spat on so take your book and shove it."

The American betrayal narrative was provided Presidential imprimatur when Barak Obama used his 2012 Memorial Day speech to announce plans for Vietnam War commemorations. Speaking to cameras with the Veterans Memorial Wall as the backdrop, the President called the Vietnam War, "one of the nation's most painful chapters." Treatment of Vietnam veterans he said, " . . . was a national shame, a disgrace that should have never happened. . . . We're here today to see that it doesn't happen again."[18] News pundits quickly associated the President's remarks with the stories of spat-upon veterans. The *Los Angeles Times* editorialized that "it was a mythical image—an edifying myth the editor said, but still a myth."

The *L.A. Times* calling-out of the spitting stories' mythical qualities as "edifying" validates Professor Elizabeth Samet's identification of the atoning role they play in American culture. As well, the editorial demonstrates the power of the spitting imagery to obscure all else of importance about the war *that the President did not say*. The political utility of betrayal narratives constructed by that imagery was evinced four years later, in May, 2016, when Senator John McCain said in a *New York Times* report that, "The lack of a welcome home is still a national shame . . . . you had 18- or 19-year-old draftees who did their duties and were literally spat upon by their fellow citizenry when they returned"—some of the same words spoken by the President.[19]

In a November 9, 2016 *New York Times* opinion piece, historian Beverly Gage commented on president-elect Donald Trump's homage to "the forgotten men and women of our country" in his victory speech the night before. For the new president war veterans had been forgotten, abandoned, and left behind. Candidate Trump had told *Fox News* on August 1, 2015, "Our vets are treated horribly. Our vets are treated like third-class citizens." If elected, he promised, "[they] will be treated properly." In January, 2016, Trump skipped the GOP primary debate sponsored by *Fox News* and held, instead, his own fundraising event benefitting veterans. From then on, his speeches were sprinkled with reminders that "the vets" have been treated horribly and promises to "do right by our vets." By Election Day, it seemed the veterans' vote was securely in the Republican Trump's column.[20]

The Republican Party is often heralded for its strong positions on national defense issues and respectful of the people who have served in the military, so it was no surprise that its 2016 candidate would follow in that tradition. But in using words such as forgotten, abandoned, and left behind to frame the veteran issue, Trump was tapping into an emotional reservoir filled with particular feelings left over from the war in Vietnam.[21]

* * * *

Images of disparaged, abandoned, and forgotten veterans are edifying myths—and they are dangerous myths. Nations bonded by commitments to avenge the hurts they've incurred in lost wars become threats to global peace: Germany's stab-in-the-back legend led it into a terrifying campaign for retribution that, in the end, destroyed Germany itself; France's generals, feeling abandoned in Indochina by civilian leaders in 1954, sought reaffirmation in Algeria two years later. The legacy of the French generals' incursion there manifested 50 years

later in the spate of Islamist bombings that raked Paris. The legacy of the United States having gone to the Persian Gulf to "kick" its Vietnam Syndrome, as President George H. W. Bush said at the time, instead supercharged the jihadi movement into the World Trade Center and enmired it in a multi-front war with no end, much less victory, in sight.

The images of victim-veterans are also an impediment to citizen opposition to more war, particularly on college campuses. In his study of political apathy in student culture, Paul Loeb found that the image of the spitting antiwar activists of the 1960s is an icon of 1990's conservative ideology and is used to intimidate would-be activists.[22] Many of today's students prefer to remain inactive out of fear that activism will lead others to associate them with the '60s-types who spat on the veterans. It is not surprising then, that as U.S. soldiers were dispatched to Bosnia late in the fall of 1995, a leaflet circulated on the campus of Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts, expressing opposition to the mission but support for the troops and the "hope that no student today will repeat the mistakes of the generation that proceeded us—by spitting on Marines".[23]

To get beyond this syndrome—the so-called Vietnam syndrome in America's political culture—the real story of solidarity between the anti-war movement and Vietnam veterans has to be told, and the image of the spat-upon veteran has to be debunked and its mythical dimensions exposed.

Notes

1. The series was kicked off by Karl Merlantes's story found here: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/07/opinion/sunday/vietnam-the-war-that-killed-trust.html?mcubz=1. Merlantes is a Vietnam veteran and the author of *Matterhorn: A Novel of the Vietnam War* and *What It Is Like to Go to War.*
2. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/20/opinion/vietnam-war-charlie-company.html?mcubz=1.
3. https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2011-08-02/war-guilt-and-thank-you-for-your-service-commentary-by-elizabeth-samet.
4. The former Marine and Rand Corporation analyst, Daniel Ellsberg, who was involved in high-level decisions on Vietnam War policies and later released to the press the documents known as the Pentagon Papers, recalled the following: "American policy makers were often quite pessimistic and knew their policies were failing. They were being told [by field commanders] that the prospects of success were very low. . . . but they went ahead anyway, prolonging and expanding the war, despite their pessimism." See Christian Appy, *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered from All Sides* (N.Y.: Penguin, 2003), 433.
5. Klaus Theweleit, *Vol. 1: Male Fantasies: Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
6. For the impression left on President Reagan by *Rambo,* see the segment "cultural impact" in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Rambo.
7. R.W. Apple, "Views on the Gulf: Lawmakers Versed in Vietnam," *New York Times*. (September 16, 1990): 18.
8. James LeMoyne, "Troops in Gulf Talk of War, and of Vietnam and Respect," *New York Times*. (September 30, 1990): 20.
9. Janice Porter, 1991. February interview with Carolyn Howe, audio recording, author's possesion.
10. Marja Mills, "Schools Ribbon Policy Draws Bush Response," *Chicago Tribune*. (February 26, 1991): C2.
11. Jerry Adler, "Prayers and Protest," *Newsweek*. (January 28, 1991): 37.
12. Virginia Carmichael, *Framing History: The Rosenberg Story and the Cold War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 3–5.
13. Carmichael, 4.
14. Stanley Cloud, "Exorcising an Old Demon: A Stunning Military Victory Gives Americans Something to Cheer About—And Shatters Vietnam's Legacy of Self-Doubt and Divisions," *Time*. (March 11, 1991), 52–53.
15. Andre Gunder Frank, "A Third World War: A Political Economy of the Persian Gulf War and the New World Order" in Hamid Mowlana, George Gerbner, and Herbert Schiller (eds.) *Triumph of the Image: The Media's War in the Persian Gulf: A Global Perspective* (Boulder: Westview, 1992), 3–21.

16. http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2014/gary-sinise-foundation.html.
17. http://www.mpacting.com/blog/2014/7/19/truth-justice-and-the-curious-case-of-chriskyle.
18. They were used again by John McCain four years later.
19. Gardner Harris, "Obama in Vietnam Will Focus on Future, Rather than Past," *New York Times*. (May 15, 2016), 10.
20. http://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/03/us/politics/donald-trump-veterans.html.
21. In the 1930s, the Republican Party was isolationist and opposed President Roosevelt taking the country into war. Other Republicans, including some in the Trump administration, have opposed U.S. commitments to NATO. Nevertheless, the party manages to posture itself as the national-defense-party at election time and win lots of veterans' votes.
22. Paul Loeb, *Generation at the Crossroads* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1991).
23. John Thompson, "Bay of the Wolf: The Feral Howl," (Worcester, MA.: self-published newsletter, College of the Holy Cross, 1995).

Chapter 23

News for All the People

Juan Gonzalez and Joseph Torres

Introduction

In no place on earth has the daily production of news formed such an integral part of a people's image of themselves—of a national narrative—as in the United States. From the earliest decades of the Republic, Americans consumed more newspapers per capita than any people on earth. Today, we are literally drowning in news and information; we have 1,400 daily newspapers, 1,700 full-power television stations, 12,000 radio stations, 17,000 magazines, and hundreds of channels to choose from on our cable systems. We have news at five, at six, at ten and at eleven o'clock. We have a raft of twenty-four-hour cable news, sports and business networks, and hundreds of thousands of Internet news sites—from the Drudge Report, to the Huffington Post, to an endless stream of YouTube videos, all available at any hour of the day or night.

Access to instant news has become so indispensable to modern society that major media companies now wield unprecedented influence over public thought. The media amplify those events they wish to while exiling others to the shadows; they fashion political and popular heroes one day only to tear them down the next; they interpret the meaning of the most earth-shaking or insignificant incident before our morning coffee or commute back home.

Despite this incessant chatter, many Americans remain remarkably misinformed about the world around us, while the professional journalists who produce our news routinely engender fear and loathing from the mightiest politician or celebrity, as well as from the lowliest citizen. The believability of our nation's news organizations has plummeted sharply in recent decades. A 2005 survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that only 19 percent of Americans believed the primary concern of news media was keeping them informed, while 75 percent thought they were more concerned with attracting the biggest audience.[1]

. . . we sketch the origin and spread of the system of news in the United States, retracing how the media came to exercise such enormous sway over public life. It is a fascinating and complex story, one that has been told in great detail many times before, but our account diverges from previous efforts in two basic ways. First, we offer an overall theory of *why* the American news media developed the way they did. That theory centers on the key political choices our leaders in Washington made about the role of the press in a democracy. We show how federal lawmakers and the courts repeatedly responded to technological breakthroughs in mass communications by rewriting the rules governing the media industry. And while those revisions were usually done at the behest of powerful corporate interests, the government was forced on several occasions to adopt important reforms that made the press more democratic and accountable to ordinary citizens, usually in an effort to placate incipient

social movements or to quell civil strife, especially during times of war. At each new stage of our media system's evolution, however, furious debate has erupted over the same question: Are the information needs of a democracy best served by a centralized or decentralized system of news? The resolution of that key question, we conclude, is paramount for defending a free and diverse press.

. . . we focus on how newspapers, radio, and television depicted a fundamental fault-line of US society—that of race and ethnicity. You will find gathered in one place for the first time the details of a startling number of major news events in which press organizations consciously misled the public and inflamed racial bias. In compiling these examples, our aim was not merely to dredge up embarrassing media failures from the distant past or to indulge in some abstract content analysis of old news. Rather, we have utilized these various examples to chronicle the key historical battles over racial discrimination that took place inside the US media. In addition, we document how advances in communications technology affected the media's depiction of race, and we recount the roles played by scores of individual journalists and media executives—the famous and the obscure, the heroes and the villains, white and non-white—in the epic struggle to supply the American people with our daily news.

The News Media and Racial Bias

It is our contention that newspapers, radio, and television played a pivotal role in perpetuating racist views among the general population. They did so by routinely portraying non-white minorities as threats to white society and by reinforcing racial ignorance, group hatred, and discriminatory government policies. The news media thus assumed primary authorship of a deeply flawed national narrative: the creation myth of heroic European settlers battling an array of backward and violent non-white peoples to forge the world's greatest democratic republic. This first draft of America's racial history was not restricted to a particular geographical region or time period—to the pre-Civil War South, for example, or the western frontier during the Indian Wars; nor was it merely the product of the virulent prejudice of a few influential media barons or opinion writers or of a specific chain of newspapers or television stations. Rather, it has persisted as a constant theme of American news reporting from the days of *Publick Occurrences,* the first colonial newspaper, to the age of the Internet.

It is the job of the modern journalist to witness events in the wider world and then convey those events and their meaning to the rest of us as quickly as possible. But such reports are fraught with weaknesses inherent to each reporter's own perception of reality—the subjectivity that so often springs from upbringing, education, class, race, religion and gender. The less the journalist knows about the event or the subject at hand, the more likely he or she is to produce a crude or blurred representation of it. Those reports are then further filtered by editors and publishers, who get to decide which portions of the reporter's dispatch are "newsworthy" and will survive, and which will disappear in the editing process.

Unavoidable though they may be, media stereotypes can have a devastating effect. This is especially true given the double-edged function of news in modern industrial society—as both a means for the masses to hold their leaders accountable and a vehicle for a nation's rulers to control their own population.

Those stereotypes that achieved the most currency tended to mirror the worldview of media owners and editors, and their top writers. Exploiting racial fears became not only a reliable way to increase newspaper sales and broadcast ratings, but also served as a tool by which powerful groups in society could stir up public support for projects of territorial and

imperial expansion, or by which to weaken opposition among the lower classes to unpopular government policies. "A sophisticated society controls its internal flows of information in ways more subtle than any government can duplicate or any legislature formulate," notes media historian Anthony Smith in an illuminating study of the mass communications battles between the West and the developing world.[2] Only by understanding the evolution of press ownership in America, and the close connection between major media companies and the nation's political and business circles, can we begin to understand the persistency of racial segregation and bigotry in the news.

By the end of the nineteenth century, newspapers had come under the domination of wire services and newly formed publishing chains. Advertising surpassed circulation as the main revenue source for news organizations, and once it did, most papers moved steadily away from controversial coverage that might alienate big advertisers or particular demographic groups of readers. As chains became more prevalent, they sought to stamp out competitors, and by the second half of the twentieth century most US cities found themselves with only one newspaper. The chains, in turn, were gradually swallowed up into even bigger news and entertainment conglomerates.[3]

The development of radio soon brought with it a handful of national radio networks that rapidly established their control over the new medium. In recent years, commercial radio and television stations, and an increasing number of Internet news sites, have likewise become cloned subsidiaries of the big conglomerates, a half-dozen of which now exercise unparalleled influence over the dissemination of information.

The dominant companies in our nation's news industry today, Disney-ABC-ESPN, NBC-Universal-Telemundo, Time Warner-CNN, Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., the major cable and telecom companies, and a few slightly smaller newspaper-based conglomerates, function as what journalism historian Ben Bagdikian once labeled an interlocking Private Ministry of Information for the nation's political and economic elites. The executives of these companies strive to shape public opinion and defend the political status quo while at the same time assuring maximum market penetration for advertisers.[4]

This concentrated media ownership has become a major obstacle for those seeking to preserve a racially diverse and democratic system of news. Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans and Asian-Americans collectively comprised 33 percent of the US population in 2005, yet virtually none of the country's daily newspapers, only 7.7 percent of its commercial radio stations, and 3.2 percent of commercial television stations were owned by minority business-people, and recent studies indicate such ownership is decreasing even more.[5] Should those trends continue, we fear that minority media ownership could disappear in the United States, leaving the nation with a de facto apartheid media system. Given that people of color are expected to comprise a majority of the population by 2050, control of virtually all the principal news production and dissemination by a white minority would be inherently undemocratic.

There is a popular notion among many Americans, especially those who came of age after the Civil Rights movement, that the quest for racial diversity in any field is a manifestation of some outdated "identity politics"—a 1960s phenomena that is no longer relevant. But people of color have been protesting their exclusion from the mainstream media and false press portrayals of their communities since the early years of the Republic. And while their demand for full inclusion has ebbed and flowed depending on the era, it has always been at the heart of efforts to establish a truly democratic and free press in the United States.

In recent decades, the digital revolution has profoundly shaken the established media system. The rapid convergence of print, audio and video communication onto the Internet has created enormous upheaval and uncertainty. Traditional commercial models of delivering

news and information are rapidly disintegrating, and even the major media conglomerates today fear potential new challengers. Daily newspaper circulation, broadcast television audiences, and telephone landline subscriptions have all shrunk dramatically. Old Media firms are straining to survive; some are disappearing altogether. Those that stay afloat keep slashing journalism staffs and reducing their expenditures on the gathering of original news.

Meanwhile, the newer delivery systems provided by wireless and cable companies over the Internet are exploding in size. They offer their customers combinations of all prior mediums: the "Triple Play" services of the major cable companies, for instance, or smart phones like Blackberry, iPhone, and Android, providing mobile access to an astonishing array of news, video, music, and consumer services. Internet and computer giants such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Yahoo, and Facebook are no longer mere producers of hardware or software services; they have become huge disseminators of news and information in their own right.

But while the Internet has opened up enormous opportunities for a return to the citizen journalism of our nation's early years, it is far from certain that people of color will share equally in those opportunities, or that the depictions of race in America will move substantially beyond repackaged stereotypes from prior eras.

The Limits of Press Freedom

Why have stereotypes been so persistent in American news, given the nation's founding commitment to freedom of the press and its many struggles over slavery, territorial expansion, and civil rights? For more than 250 years the nation's news media, no matter how politically liberal, conservative or radical, no matter what class they purported to represent, remained the press of its white population. Its key newspapers, magazines and broadcast stations were owned and operated by whites; the content they produced was aimed largely at white readers and listeners.

With a few exceptions, Native American, African-American, Latino, and Asian-American journalists were systematically excluded from the principal newsrooms of the country until the 1970s. Even today, four decades after the civil rights movement prompted top news media executives to concede their industry's past failures and to promise integration of their newsrooms, most media companies, even the most liberal and progressive ones, still employ minority journalists in numbers far below those reflecting the racial makeup of the communities they serve. The result has been an almost routine distortion of the lives and events of people of color by the press.

This occurred despite the fact that news coverage of non-white communities has always been a staple of the country's media industry. Indian barbarism, for example, was the overriding theme of numerous news accounts about Native Americans in our early media. "From Boston to Savannah newspapers reported atrocities inflicted upon innocent white settlers by the 'Sculking Indian Enemy,' " notes historian David Copeland. Late-nineteenth-century newspaper accounts about Indians, another study notes, were "more threatening and violent than actual Indians," thus "producing 'deviant' native identities that served the needs of a land-hungry nation."[6]

The systemic failures of our press on matters of race and ethnicity do not end merely with biased reporting and employment discrimination. The horrific record of the white press in fomenting mob violence and massacres against non-white communities is one of the lurid scandals of American journalism. We provide here enough examples—among them the anti-abolitionist riots of 1835; several anti-Chinese pogroms in the western states; the Camp Grant massacre of Apaches in 1871; the armed white overthrow of duly elected black leadership in Wilmington, North Carolina in 1898; the East St. Louis riot of 1917; the Los Angeles

Zoot Suit riot of 1943; the violent eruption against the admission of James Meredith at Ole Miss in 1963—to suggest these were hardly aberrations of an otherwise fair and impartial press. What amazed us as we delved into the facts behind each incident is how often the white press portrayed the victims of such racial attacks as the instigators or perpetrators of violence.

We describe, in addition, how federal policies often aided the major press in perpetuating the white racial narrative. The Post Office, for instance—the critical mainstay of our early newspapers—eagerly bowed to Southern slaveholders and balked at delivering abolitionist or black newspapers to Southern readers. During both world wars, the federal government targeted the black press for special censorship and restrictions because of its continued calls for an end to Jim Crow. During the early years of radio, the Federal Communications Commission and its forerunner, the Federal Radio Commission, granted scarce broadcasting licenses to known racists or KKK-connected groups.[7]

Federal regulators did not simply ignore the white-supremacist views of some applicants—they refused to sanction racist broadcasts for violating the public-interest requirements of federal communications law. In 1931, for example, more than 700,000 African-Americans petitioned the Federal Radio Commission to complain about the racist stereotyping prevalent on the Amos 'n' Andy show, the black-face minstrel comedy that was hugely popular among white audiences. Robert Vann, publisher of the *Pittsburgh Courier,* then the nation's largest black newspaper, spearheaded the campaign and demanded the Commission cancel the show. In a sign of how little regard the Commission felt for the country's black population, officials never even bothered to respond.

"We Wish to Plead Our Own Cause"

The alternative press was launched in the early nineteenth century by white editors and writers from marginalized political groups and nascent urban workers' organizations to champion dissident views. That press has been locked for more than two centuries in a war of words with the commercial media over the content and character of the nation's news. Unfortunately, our dissident press has long suffered from the same racial blind spot as our commercial press. Radical and labor editors have too often imitated commercial publishers by excluding people of color from their newsrooms and ignoring important stories in minority communities. This was equally true of the workingmen's or abolitionist newspapers of the 1830s, the populist muckraking or socialist press of the early 1900s, the New Left media of the 1970s, or the progressive bloggers of the Internet era.

Such racial exclusion gave rise to a separate, segregated wing of America's opposition press, more commonly referred to today as the "minority" or "ethnic" media. The editors and journalists of this "other" press were often ignored, disdained or persecuted while they were alive; many of their newspapers and broadcasts were never archived for posterity in public and university libraries, and most have since been relegated to the footnotes of official journalism histories. Yet they waged heroic battles with their papers and over the airwaves to tell a different story—to assure fair and accurate news accounts of their communities; and they often proved to be more consistent defenders of press freedom and democratic values than the commonly celebrated titans of American journalism such as Greeley, Hearst, and Pulitzer.

Another major aim of this book is to unearth the saga of this "other" American journalism, to collect in one place and preserve for future generations some of the achievements of those editors and journalists of color who repeatedly challenged the worst racial aspects of our national narrative. "We wish to plead our own cause," John Russwurm and Samuel Cornish

proclaimed in 1827 in their inaugural issue of New York's *Freedom's Journal,* the first black-owned newspaper in America. "Too long have others spoken for us."

. . . we chronicle the rise of that minority press. Though the first Spanish-language newspaper in the United States, *El Misisipi,* was founded in New Orleans in 1808, a true press by journalists of color did not emerge in the country until the 1820s, when Rev. Felix Varela founded *El Habanero* in 1824 in Philadelphia, Russwurm and Cornish launched *Freedom's Journal,* and Elias Boudinot initiated the *Cherokee Phoenix* in 1828 in New Echota, Georgia. By 1854, the *Golden Hills News* became the first of dozens of Chinese-language newspapers that would be published in the United States during the nineteenth century.

Except for Russwurm, Frederick Douglass, Martin Delany, Ida B. Wells and a handful of others, the pioneering figures of the non-white press have been largely forgotten. Robert L. Vann, for example, served as the editor and publisher of the Pittsburgh *Courier* from 1910 until 1940. During that time his paper built a circulation of more than a quarter-million and Vann became the most influential black journalist of the twentieth century. Yet for white America it was as if Vann "had never really existed." His death in 1940 was barely mentioned in national publications, and even the press of his home city of Pittsburgh "gave him the most perfunctory recognition."[8]

Several immigrant journalists played major roles from this country in promoting press freedom and revolutionary movements in other parts of the world. Perhaps the finest example was José Martí, the poet and revolutionary who worked as a correspondent in the United States for Latin American newspapers for more than fifteen years. Then there is Sun Yat Sen, the founding father of modern China, who established the *Hawaiian Chinese News* in 1896 in Honolulu; and Ricardo Flores Magon and Catarino Garza, both radical opponents of Mexican dictator Porfirio Díaz, who edited newspapers throughout the Southwest during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

We also recount the riveting personal stories of those nearly forgotten pioneer journalists who broke the color barrier in the commercial news media. They include Thomas Morris Chester, a war correspondent for the *Philadelphia Press* in the final years of the Civil War and one of the few nineteenth-century black writers to work in the commercial white press: Ted Poston, legendary staff writer for the *New York Post* in the 1940s and 1950s; John Rollin Ridge, the Cherokee poet and novelist who founded and published the *Sacramento Daily Bee* in 1857; Myrta Eddleman, who in 1897 became the first Native American woman to own a mainstream newspaper, Oklahoma's *Muskogee Daily Times*; Miguel Teurbe Tolón, a poet and publisher in his homeland of Cuba who worked in the 1850s as Latin affairs editor for the *New York Herald*; and fellow Cuban José Agustín Quintero, who founded *El Ranchero* in San Antonio in 1856, before embarking on a distinguished fifteen-year career as an editor at the New Orleans *Picayune*.[9]

. . . we chart how the rise of giant newspaper chains, the news-wire services, and the radio and television networks sharply reduced opportunities for people of color to exercise real freedom of the press. By the end of the nineteenth century, our country was a growing world power with a new overseas empire. Rapid and reliable communications between parts of that empire became not simply an economic necessity but a requirement of imperial military strategy. Nonetheless, the first decades of the twentieth century witnessed more involvement by blacks and Hispanics in radio than is generally acknowledged. Scores of African-Americans were active in the amateur radio movement after World War I, and the Commerce Department issued the first commercial radio license to a Hispanic in 1922—more than twenty years earlier than commonly believed. But once the federal government moved to regulate access to the airwaves with the creation of the Federal Radio Commission in 1927,

people of color were completely shut out of ownership in the growing industry; even their presence on the air was sharply reduced.

The massive entrance of blacks and Latinos into the military during World War II prompted some improvement in media portrayals of non-whites, as the government, responding to widespread social unrest and race riots during the war, pressured radio owners to provide more diversity in news and entertainment programming. On the heels of that effort, Raoul Cortéz became the first post-war Latino commercial radio owner when he launched KCOR-AM in San Antonio in 1946, and Jesse B. Blayton became the first African-American owner of a station license in 1949, with WERD in Atlanta.

It would take a new wave of urban riots twenty years later, and a pivotal battle in the federal courts to integrate Mississippi television, before the nation finally took significant steps toward the racial integration of our media system. In 1968, the US Commission on Civil Disorders strongly criticized the role played by the media in covering minority communities. "Along with the country as a whole, the press has too long basked in a white world, looking out of it, if at all, with white men's eyes and a white perspective," the Commission warned.

> That is no longer good enough. The painful process of readjustment that is required of the American news media must begin now. They must make a reality of integration—in both their product and personnel. They must insist on the highest standards of accuracy—not only reporting single events with care and skepticism, but placing each event into a meaningful perspective.[10]

The Commission urged immediate steps to increase the presence of minorities in the newspaper and broadcast industries. Its call led to sweeping media reforms by government leaders and press barons in the late 1970s. Thus began what we have called the new democratic revolution in the American press. That revolution included the adoption of federally mandated affirmative action programs to speed up minority employment and ownership in broadcasting, bold new programs by universities and associations of media executives to improve industry hiring practices, and the rise of Spanish-language television. The period also witnessed hundreds of challenges to local station licenses by minority communities—even some sit-ins and occupations of some stations. The unprecedented upsurge literally forced broadcast owners and publishers to hire and promote non-white journalists and to improve coverage of racial minorities.

Once that first generation of black, Latino, Asian and Native American journalists entered those newsrooms, they encountered such enormous hostility from white colleagues that they were forced to create their own professional associations as their only support networks. Those associations quickly grew in size, and assumed central roles as watchdogs and pressure groups within the industry to monitor news coverage and hiring practices.

All popular movements, however, provoke organized resistance from defenders of the status quo. By the 1980s and early 1990s, conservative politicians had begun rolling back several federal regulations aimed at assuring racial integration and diversity of ownership in newspapers and broadcasting. At the same time, the cable industry, which had initially ushered in a new era of diverse ownership and programming, became dominated by a few giant companies.

Some believe that the emergence of the Internet in the final decades of the twentieth century has offered hope for a return to a decentralized system of news dissemination. But cyberspace, has quickly evinced the same kind of unequal racial divide in ownership and content that has marked the rest of our media system.

The persistence of racial inequality in the news industry is part of a broader crisis facing American journalism. Thousands of professional journalists are today losing their jobs. The survivors find it increasingly difficult to produce the kinds of meaningful information the American people need. And while Internet blogs and websites run by citizen journalists are increasingly generating important news that the commercial media ignore, such sites have yet to provide an economic model for sustaining thousands of full-time journalists in the pursuit and production of news—a model that could replace what Old Media have done for 200 years.

The central role of the press in our society makes this industry-wide crisis a crucial problem for the entire nation. Thankfully, many citizens already understand this. In the first decade of the twenty-first century a new and powerful citizen movement for media reform came of age. That movement, which arose during a battle to prevent the FCC from deregulating broadcast ownership provisions, already counts millions of Americans from across the political spectrum in its ranks. The members of this new movement are deeply disturbed by the concentration of ownership in our news media. They are frustrated and angry over the endless hyper-commercialism, infotainment and obsession with violence and sex that dominate its content. They worry that despite the great potential of the Internet, the largest communications companies exercise too much control over news and entertainment. They fear that these big media firms, along with the cable, telecom, and satellite broadcast companies that control the "pipes" through which news, audio, video and Internet data reach every home, are displaying only disdain for the public-service responsibilities of the press, eliminating local voices, driving out diversity of viewpoints, undermining our democracy.

With each day that passes, with each new advance in mass communications technology, our biggest media companies feverishly race to readjust, to become bigger and more dominant in the marketplace. Only by clearly grasping the main conflicts and choices that shape our current media system can ordinary citizens successfully unite with the concerned journalists and workers within the system to bring about meaningful reform. The second democratic revolution of the US media has already begun. Those who hope to triumph in that revolution must first understand how our system of news reached its current state. It is an amazing saga, brimming with picturesque rascals and wide-eyed visionaries, with legendary big-city publishers and obscure immigrant editors, with writers of astonishing courage and legions of cowardly charlatans, with brilliant statesman and the worst of racial arsonists.

Notes

1. Between 1985 and 2005, the believability of local TV news plunged from 85 percent to 62 percent; for newspapers it declined from 84 percent to 64 percent. All major networks experienced similar though less precipitous drops. See Pew Research Center for the People and the Press. "Public More Critical of the Press, But Goodwill Persists," (June 26, 2005). Available at peoplepress.org/reports/display.php3?ReportID=248.
2. Anthony Smith, *The Geopolitics of Information: How Western Culture Dominates the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980): 151.
3. Ben Bagdikian, *The Media Monopoly*, first edition 1983 (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000): 3–26; Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988): 1–35; James Fallows, *Breaking the News: How The Media Undermine American Democracy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996): 47–73; Robert W. McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communications Politics in Dubious Times* (New York: New Press, 1999): 16–29; Gene Roberts, Thomas Kunkel and Charles Layton, (eds.) *Leaving Readers Behind: The Age of Corporate Newspapering* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001): 109–56; Leonard Downie Jr and Robert G. Kaiser, *The News About the News: American Journalism in Peril* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002): 14–29.

4. Robert McChesney, *The Problem of the Media: US Communications Politics in the 21st Century* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2004): 57–97; Bagdikian: 18–26.
5. S. Derek Turner and Mark Cooper, "Minority and Female TV Station Ownership in the United States: Current Status, Comparative Statistical Analysis and the Effects of FCC Policy and Media Consolidation," Free Press, 2006. Available at www.stopbig-media.com/files/out_of_the_picture.pdf; S. Derek Turner "Off The Dial: Female and Minority Radio Station Ownership in the United States," Free Press, 2007. Available at www.freepress.net/files/off_the_dial_summary.pdf.
6. David A. Copeland, *Colonial American Newspapers: Character and Content* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1977): 43; John Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820–1890* (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 1999): 13.
7. "Klan Radio Station Seeks 50,000 Watts," *New York Times,* (October 9, 1927). For internal opposition by the Federal Radio Commission, see Department of Commerce, Navigation Service, (April 19, 1927) "Records of the Federal Communications Commission Radio Division: Correspondence Relating to Applications for Broadcast Licenses, 1928–1932."
8. Andrew Buni, *Robert L. Vann of The Pittsburg Courier: Politics and Black Journalism* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974): xi.
9. In compiling those stories, we are indebted to the work of dozens of intrepid scholars of the ethnic press—people like Martin Dann, Frankie Hutton, Donna Halper, Jacqueline Bacon, William Barlow and Brian Ward for the black press; Karl Lo and H.M. Lai for the Asian-American press; John Coward and Mark Trajant for the Native American press; and A. Gabriel Meléndez, Nicolas Kanellos and Felix Gutiérrez for the Latino press.
10. *The Kerner Report: The 1968 Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988): 389.

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Section V

The Nation-State and the Global Economy

Since the early 1970s, corporations have taken accelerated advantage of developments in communications and transportation technology to decentralize their operations. This was abetted by the severe decline in union membership which was still 25% of the labor force in 1970. Key investment, design, and marketing functions tend to remain concentrated in particular cities (New York, London, Tokyo, etc.), while production has been dispersed, and this has produced what has been called the "deindustrialization" of the United States, a steady decline in domestic manufacturing that began in the early 1970s. This and the increasing internationalization of services and the quickening pace with which financial capital can be moved and traded have been identified as signs that the national economies once characteristic of capitalism have been replaced by a truly global market (Barnet and Cavanagh 1994). Others argue that nationally specific resources are still central to economic activity; for example, the great bulk of foreign investment remains within the most advanced capitalist economies, and multinational corporations still remain tied to specific host countries (Hirst and Thompson 1996). This would suggest that the argument that national economies have been superseded by a global economy is incorrect, or at best premature.

The debate over the extent and consequences of globalization raises important questions for social scientists studying power. We have already seen throughout this book how the distribution of social resources serves as both a resource for and an expression of power. The class nature of political power becomes magnified at the global level. Of the fifty largest economic entities in the world, only fifteen of these are national economies, while the rest are corporations (Sklair 2002). These corporations obviously are able to wield extraordinary power, but the more significant question is what happens to the nation-state in the context of this global economic power. In asking this question, we must be clear that the history of capitalism from its origins has been characterized by the subordination of political institutions in the periphery of global capitalism to the economic needs of the dominant, core countries. Spain, Portugal, Holland, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and the United States have all taken on this role at various points in modern history. Indigenous political institutions were destroyed and replaced with more compliant colonial regimes. More recently, when governments in poorer countries have challenged this relationship of subordination and dependency, they have been subjected to various forms of subversion (assassination, military coups, invasion, psychological warfare), sponsored and supported, either directly or indirectly, by core countries (Blum 1985; Parenti 1989; Parenti 2011). Thus, the question of what the impact of global capitalism has been on the nation-state must be seen as directed toward the nation-states of the core countries themselves.

Leo Panitch was a professor of political science at York University in Ontario and the longtime co-editor of the Socialist Review as well as an author, commentator, and organizer.

Sam Gindin's career was spent as the director of research with the Canadian Auto Workers. From 2000 to 2010 Gindin was Visiting Packer Chair in Social Justice with the Political Science Department at York University. Since then he has been teaching a course at York designed to bring together activists and academics and writing for leftist publications and websites such as Jacobin. In 2012 Panitch and Gindin published The Making of Global Capitalism: The Political Economy of American Empire. In this award-winning book, the authors examined the central role of the U.S. Federal Reserve and the Treasury Department in creating and maintaining the globalization of the world's economies as a foundation for an informal U.S. dominated empire. This is an empire without the direct conquest and administration of territories. In addition to the Fed and the Treasury Department, this is a system backed by U.S. military might and U.S. domination of the World Bank and the IMF. The dollar remains the preferred global currency, and the U.S. decides on military interventions. Other nations are expected to defer.

Radhika Desai teaches in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg where she also directs the Geopolitical Economy Research Group. "The Multipolar Moment" is taken from Desai's 2013 book Geopolitical Economy: After US Hegemony, Globalization and Empire. Desai argues that the global hegemonic status achieved by Great Britain during the 19th century was due to a unique set of circumstances that cannot be replicated. Therefore, efforts by the U.S. throughout the 20th century and especially after World War II to replace Britain as the global hegemon have failed and will continue to fail. The main reason for this is that it is a crowded field or what she describes as a world defined by multiplurality. As the world's first industrial power Britain largely had the world to itself. Today it is a world with many nations with an industrial base, in some cases very substantial ones. As that number grows, it becomes ever harder to achieve hegemonic status. Although Desai does not mention Panitch and Gindin's The Making of Global Capitalism, her work stands as a strong implied critique of theirs.

This is David Harvey's second appearance in this volume. His "The Construction of Consent" was in Section III, The State: Practice. In this selection "The New Imperialism" Harvey rejects all of the publicized reasons provided by President George W. Bush for his 2003 invasion of Iraq—weapons of mass destruction, Saddam Hussein's alleged involvement in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and bringing the gift of freedom to the Iraqi people. Harvey then examines the reasons why he thinks that the U.S. invasion of Iraq may well signal the decline of American national power and not its further enhancement. One sign is that the U.S. is no longer dominant in research and development as it once was. We also have a major decline in manufacturing jobs. Major manufacturing sectors ranging from electronics and electronic equipment to pharmaceuticals are now dominated by non-U.S. corporations. Furthermore, high levels of personal and national indebtedness threaten economic stability. The situation is unstable, even volatile, and even the near-term future cannot be predicted with a high degree of confidence. Even in the area of military resources, Harvey writes, "The US may dominate in remote-controlled destructive power, but it simply has not got the will or the resources to sustain a long-term military occupation on the ground."

The last reading in this section is by the late Immanuel Wallerstein. In "The Twin Towers as Metaphor" Wallerstein begins by quoting the first stanza of "America the Beautiful" which had been written as a poem in the 1890s before it was set to music:

> O beautiful for patriot dream
> That sees beyond the years
> Thine alabaster cities gleam

Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

Wallerstein notes that U.S. presidents since 1900 have often declared the country to be the world's greatest, a view shared by most who live in the U.S. In 2016 Donald Trump was able to parlay the slogan "Make America Great Again" that launched a campaign to restore a tarnished America back to its rightful place as the greatest. Greatest in what? Wallerstein answers greatest in freedom, opportunity, gadgetry and more. Yet Wallerstein points out that not all people in the world share this view. He cites Osama bin Laden, architect of the 9/11 attacks, who noted that the U.S. delivers 9/11 attacks to Muslims on a regular basis. Bin Laden described Americans as murderous, hypocritical, and 'morally depraved'.

Definitely 9/11 changed things and made it clear that it is now an illusion that the U.S. can any longer unilaterally dictate to the rest of the world. The last true instance of that was in Chile in 1973. As a result, there are now abundant choices on the table both in terms of how Americans think about themselves and the choices policy makers can make. As a nation, in other words, we have moved from clarity and certainty to ambiguity and uncertainty.

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Chapter 24

The Making of Global Capitalism

Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin

Although Marx discerned in the middle of the nineteenth century that a new class of capitalists was creating "a world after its own image," it actually took until the beginning of the twenty-first century before "a constantly expanding market" could be said to have fully spread capitalist social relations "over the entire surface of the globe." Moreover, it was not a generic "bourgeoisie" driven by competition to "nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere" that alone made global capitalism after its own image. It took an empire of a new kind, founded on US capitalism's great economic strength and centered on the capacities of the American state, to make global capitalism a reality. Yet no sooner did the task look to be more or less complete when the fourth great crisis of global capitalism (after those of the 1870s, the 1930s, and the 1970s) spread rapidly across the world. Marx's observation 150 years earlier that the making of capitalism on a global scale was "paving the way for more extensive and more destructive crises" while at the same time "diminishing the means whereby crises are prevented," seemed all too fully confirmed. And it was now the American empire that seemed to resemble "the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells."[1]

Given the severity and duration of the latest crisis in a global capitalist economy that the American state had been so central to constructing, it was hardly surprising to see a resurgence of pronouncements that US hegemony was coming to an end. As pundits of every persuasion once again blur the lines between a capitalist crisis and the decline of the US empire, it is especially important to recognize the central role which the American state continues to play in reproducing global capitalism. The current crisis has amply demonstrated the many challenges and contradictions it faces in doing this; but it has also demonstrated that, while the American empire is certainly not always able to control the spirits it has called up from the deep, it nevertheless remains critical to the system's survival.

The new crisis has confirmed more generally the continuing significance of states in global capitalism. Although the institutions of the European Union have more constitutional authority than other international organizations, their inability to intervene so as to resolve the debt crisis of their smaller member-states is largely due to the internal political dynamics within *other* member-states, above all Germany. The eurozone crisis also confirms a basic fact about the nature of both globalization and informal empire: state sovereignty is not effaced within it. This can be seen in the difficulties the American state has continually had to confront in getting the German state—from the time of the Herstaat banking crisis in the 1970s to the Mexican crisis in the 1990s to the crisis of the euro today—to overcome its obsession with inflation and "moral hazard;" and to take its share of responsibility for containing crises. Yet this cannot be understood in terms of states, least of all Germany, retreating from free trade and free capital flows in favor of economic nationalism. After decades of

economic integration, there are no national bourgeoisies like those that supported the fascist turn in Germany or Italy in the interwar period.

When the term "empire" was openly embraced to characterize the American state at the time of the Bush administration's response to 9/11 (including by some of its advisors), the stress was placed, in Niall Ferguson's words, on the "potential advantages of a self-conscious American imperialism" as against "the grave perils of being an 'empire in denial.' " The anxieties of a Kansas farmer that "we are trying to run the world too much . . . like the Romans used to" were taken as exemplifying not just the difficulties of mediating the American state's international and domestic roles, but the loss of imperial vigor and discipline—the main measure of which, allegedly, was that the bill for Social Security in the US was larger than the bill for national security. Notably, it was not a new world of rival imperial states that occupied the minds of such analysts of US empire. The resentments over the disloyalty of Germany and France at the time of the invasion of Iraq quickly dissolved once these states introduced the motion at the UN to have it endorse the occupation a year later; while the US integration with China was such that Ferguson himself dubbed it "Chimerica." With the typical hyperbole that was so common in the years after 9/11, he rather claimed it was now only "non-state actors" like criminal organizations and terrorist cells "who truly wield global power."[2]

The real problems of the US empire today appear in a very different light. As the global economic crisis triggered by the American financial crisis of 2007–08 persists, these problems have more to do with the difficulties of implementing adequate measures for "failure-containment," let alone "failure-prevention." Yet, unlike in the 1930s, this has not been due to a breakdown of cooperation among capitalist states. As the G20 Toronto Summit communiqué of June 2010 proclaimed: "While the global economic crisis led to the sharpest decline of trade in more than seventy years, G20 countries chose to keep markets open to the opportunities that trade and investment offer. It was the right choice." The leaders renewed their "commitment to refrain from raising barriers or imposing new barriers to investment or trade in goods and services [and] minimize any negative impact on trade and investment of our domestic policy actions, including fiscal policy and action to support the financial sector."[3]

But capitalist state solidarity itself could not resolve the crisis of a finance-led global economy, where the orthodoxy of insisting on austerity—both to ensure that states pay their bond-holders and to maintain vigilance against inflation—reinforces the stagnationist tendencies of underconsumption that come with the diminished consumer credit available to sustain effective demand. The liberalization and expansion of finance, as this book has shown, was essential to the making of global capitalism, yet it came with a degree of volatility that threatened economic stability. Reviving capitalist health today requires strengthening the confidence of bankers that their activities will be appreciated and their assets protected. The unresolved dilemma for all capitalist states today is how to both stimulate the economy and regulate financial markets so as to limit increasingly dangerous volatility without undermining the ability of finance to play its essential role in global capitalism.

For most states, any attempt at fiscal stimulus aggravates the fears of bond-holders that they won't be repaid, and the increased rate of interest on the bonds necessary to fund fiscal and trade deficits requires the restructuring of state expenditure to prioritize interest payments over social expenditures, infrastructure development, and public employment—thereby negating the very attempt at stimulus. This is less true for the US itself due to the "safe haven" that Treasury bonds represent, the appreciation of which is inseparable from the role of the American state as the ultimate guarantor of global capitalist interests. But the US faces its own policy dilemmas in relation to economic stimulus. The one immediate measure

the US administration could take on its own to quickly revive effective demand—instructing the US housing agencies it directly controls to write off mortgage debt above the current value of existing homes—has been ruled out because it would reduce the banks' mandated capital adequacy just as they are being required to raise it, and lower their revenues as homeowners made smaller monthly payments. This once again reveals the structural relationship between Wall Street and Washington: what makes such a move so unlikely is not the state of play in Congress, but rather that it would threaten the solvency of some of the very large banks who are more than ever "too big to fail"—because their failure would trigger the failures of other financial institutions, not only in the US but around the world.[4]

To be sure, the conflict between Congress and the administration, reflecting the internal contradiction which the American state faces in acting as both the state of the United States and the "indispensable" state of global capitalism, has certainly worried leading capitalists and officials. The CEO of Caterpillar, the world's largest manufacturer of construction and mining equipment, called Washington's debt-ceiling saga in the summer of 2011 not only "ugly" but also "a red herring," which got in the way of Congress's ratification of outstanding free-trade agreements, as well as much-needed domestic infrastructure programs.[5] The Fed's Ben Bernanke, noting that Congress had "disrupted financial markets," warned that "similar events in the future could, over time, seriously jeopardize the willingness of investors around the world to hold US financial assets or to make direct investments in job-creating US businesses."[6] Yet, although it was precisely on these grounds that the credit-rating agency Standard & Poor's downgraded US Treasury bonds, what was especially remarkable was that the appetite for these bonds, even at record-low interest rates, far from abating, increased.[7] Ruminations about an alternative reserve currency went nowhere—especially as the smoldering crisis in Europe's interbank markets burst into flames, sending the widespread earlier expectations that the euro would challenge the dollar up in smoke.

Much like Germany in the crisis of the 1970s, even China today explicitly speaks in terms of the US's unique responsibilities for "the world's economic soundness," given its status as "the world's largest economy and the issuer of the dominant international reserve currency." American political leaders were reminded that "political brinkmanship in Washington is dangerously irresponsible . . . It risks, among other consequences, strangling the still fragile economic recovery of not only the United States but also the world as a whole."[8] Similarly, the concerns of many capitalists in developing states were that the US might now abandon them. The extent to which they continued to look to the American state to help them restructure their own states was seen when Obama visited India in November 2010, accompanied by the largest-ever entourage of US businessmen on such a trip, and told an assembly of Mumbai capitalists: "We don't simply welcome your rise, we ardently support it. We want to invest in it."[9] The importance of this to Indian capitalists was made very clear by the cofounder of India's National Association of Software and Service Companies, who recalled that the US "was the one who said to us . . . 'Go for free trade and open markets.' " This was crucial to his industry's success in "pushing our government to open our markets for American imports, 100 percent foreign ownership of companies and tough copyright laws when it wasn't fashionable." Stressing the continuing importance of the US in overcoming "the socialist/protectionists among India's bureaucrats," he emphasized: "We don't want America to lose self-confidence . . . there is nobody else to take that leadership. Do we want China as the world's moral leader? No. We desperately want America to succeed."[10]

There were deep structural factors at work here, reflecting the extensive networks that link the world's capitalists not only to US MNCs, but to US financial, legal, and business services more generally. The enormous demand for US Treasury bonds showed the extent to which the world remained on the dollar standard and the American state continued to be regarded

as the main underwriter of value. Also confirmed was the US Treasury and Fed's central role in global crisis-management—from currency swaps to provide other states with much needed dollars, to overseeing policy cooperation among the G20 as well as G7 central banks and finance ministries. It was the formerly highly touted supranational system of European governance—exposed in the crisis for its lack of central authority over taxation, bond issuance, and budget approval—which now appeared most dysfunctional for the management of global capitalism.

The eurozone crisis was not something that cheered the American state. The Fed's provision of liquidity to US financial institutions was undertaken with one eye to their passing that liquidity to Europe through the interbank market. The Treasury was intimately involved in policy discussions, directly as well as through the IMF, with Geithner discretely "pressing Europe to take more decisive action" at the regular conference calls of the G7 finance ministers now taking place almost weekly. It was a sign of "the growing concern in Washington at Europe's handling of its debt crisis" by the fall of 2011 that Geithner flew over to attend meetings of European finance ministers.[11] Particularly frustrating was the limited extent to which the European Central Bank was prepared to act as lender of last resort. But behind this lay a frustration with the European states themselves. At a meeting in Washington an ECB official was greeted by his American host, who "brandished the Articles of Confederation, the 1781 precursor to the United States Constitution, to use as an example of why stronger unions become necessary."[12]

It was clear by this time that all the heady talk between Russia, China and other emerging market states about using "SDRs" (the IMF's "special drawing rights"), let alone the euro, to displace the dollar as the international reserve currency had amounted to little more than rhetoric. Rumors that the Middle East's oil-exporting states would abandon the dollar vanished with the 2011 "Arab Spring," just as May '68 put a stop to expectations that France might lead a return to the gold standard. The dollar's continuing central global role certainly produced problems for rapidly growing emerging market economies, which experienced high capital inflows and currency appreciation as a result of the Fed's low interest rates and quantitative easing policies. This stoked real-estate and stock-market bubbles in these countries, and threatened to undermine their competitiveness and bring back hyperinflation. But criticisms such as those repeatedly heard in 2011 from Brazil—that US policy might lead to "currency wars"—amounted to nothing like a challenge to US hegemony.

The notion that the G20 would effectively become the linchpin of crisis-management and policy-coordination appeared mere window dressing by the time of the Cannes summit in the fall of 2011, with the BRIC countries left to insist that whatever financial contributions they might make to the European bailout would be channeled through an IMF still dominated by the G7, and especially the US Treasury. The most significant change from the pattern of crisis-management in the 1980s and 1990s was that, whereas it had earlier been the developing states that were required to practice austerity, the prescription of a capitalist cure for this structural crisis was reversed: the G7 states now committed themselves to austerity, while encouraging the emerging market states to stimulate their economies. This reflected the fact that the major developing states were now much more an integral part of global capitalism, so the priority was no longer just to restructure them to facilitate free trade but also to make them more responsible for sustaining global demand. Yet the rising purchasing power of the developing countries could hardly make up for stagnation in the developed ones (US consumption expenditure alone in 2010 was still over three times that of China and India combined).[13]

The real issue was less about changing consumption patterns than whether any other state would be capable of playing the crucial role in the reproduction of global capitalism played

by the American state. Claims that this would be a European supra-state now looked threadbare indeed. And amid all the talk about the impending dominance of China, the crucial question rarely posed was whether the Chinese state had the capacity to take on extensive responsibilities for managing global capitalism. No one seriously imagines Russia, even with its admission to the WTO, could readily develop such capacity; but even China is manifestly still a very long way from being able to do so. To this point, far from displacing the American empire, China rather seems to be duplicating Japan's supplemental role of providing the steady inflow of funds needed to sustain the US's primary place in global capitalism.[14]

Were this to change, it would require deeper and much more liberalized financial markets within China, which would entail dismantling the capital controls that are key pillars of Communist Party rule—at a time, moreover, when its own banking system is under severe stress. Furthermore, a major reorientation of Chinese patterns of investment and production away from exports towards domestic consumption would have incalculable implications for the social relations that have sustained China's rapid growth and global integration. It would involve a restructuring of the country's coastal industries, which would come up against powerful vested interests among Chinese capitalists and regional officials. And getting households to spend their savings on current consumption would also require the development of a welfare state, as well as ongoing increases in wages. Given the redistribution of income that this would entail, which could only happen through a substantial shift of power to the working class, all of this—while certainly possible in the long run—would meet resistance that would go well beyond just those firms involved in exporting low-wage goods.

The current conflicts in which Chinese workers are engaged—as seen in strike waves that have yielded some large wage increases but no clear organizational transformation in Chinese trade unionism—pose increasingly sharp choices for the whole of Chinese society.[15] It cannot be known in advance whether working-class struggles in China will lead to the emulation of the West's individualized consumerism, or whether they will lead to new collectivist claims. What is clear is that the outcome cannot but impinge on, and possibly even be affected by, the direction working classes elsewhere take out of the current crisis.

While the first global capitalist crisis of the twenty-first century was rooted in the volatility of finance, not in a crisis of production, an important factor in generating the conditions that led to it was what had happened with the world's working classes since the crisis of the 1970s. The massive growth of the global proletariat that has been the sine qua non of capitalist globalization produces tendencies towards a narrowing of the differences in wages and conditions between developed and developing countries, and the continuing travail of trade unionism in the developed capitalist countries has partly been a reflection of this. The very financialization through which global capitalism was realized was also the means through which workers were disciplined; and the political and organizational defeats they had suffered since the 1980s were closely linked to the recovery of corporate profitability—albeit a recovery characterized by new vulnerabilities, above all that so much consumption was dependent on credit.

The severity and extent of the current crisis has once again exposed how far the world's states are enveloped in capitalism's irrationalities. Even when states committed in 2009 to stimulate their economies, they felt impelled at the same time to lay off public-sector workers or cut back their pay, and to demand that bailed-out companies do the same. And while blaming the volatile derivatives market for causing the crisis, states promoted derivatives trading in carbon credits in the hope that green capitalism would provide a two-for-one remedy for the global climate and economic crises. In the context of such readily visible irrationalities, a strong case can be made that, if jobs and the communities that depend on them are to be saved in a way that will convert production and distribution to conform with

ecologically sustainable priorities, there must be a break with the logic of capitalist markets rather than the use of state institutions to reinforce them.

When in 1942 "An American Proposal" envisaged the replacement of "a dead or dying imperialism" with an American empire of a new kind, in order to establish "universal free trade" by reorganizing "the economic resources of the world so as to make possible a return to the system of free enterprise in every country," it acknowledged that the primary barrier to this was the "uprising of the international proletariat" that had occurred over the previous twenty years.[16] Despite all the subsequent Cold War rhetoric, it was not the threat of external Soviet military expansion but the new political and economic strength of working classes in so many societies, including within the advanced capitalist countries, which was the real barrier. It was only overcome, as we have seen, once the postwar contradictions of strong working classes coexisting with increasingly strong capitalist classes had led to the crisis of the 1970s, and then to the defeats suffered by the working classes in its wake. To the extent that, in the course of the postwar years, the working classes increasingly lost interest in the idea of socialism, this had much to do with the belief that the Bretton Woods agreement and Keynesian economics would usher in a crisis-free, socially just "mixed economy." Yet not only the crisis of the 1970s, but also the economic instability and growing inequality of the neoliberal decades that followed, proved this to be an illusion.

Equally illusory is the belief that there is a way back to a supposed postwar "real economy" from the finance-led capitalism which greased the wheels of globalization. Capitalist finance is in truth no less real than capitalist production—and not just because of the way it affects the rest of the economy during both boom and bust, but because it is integral to capitalist production and accumulation as well as to the extension and deepening of global capitalism.[17] There is in fact no possibility of going back to the largely mythical "mixed economy" the New Deal and Keynesian welfare state are imagined to have represented. In the US itself, just as democracy appeared to trump race with the election of a black president, so did he reinforce once in office, even through his timid reforms, the neoliberal system of class power and inequality. We have seen Southern and Eastern Europeans being sharply rebuked for even having aspirations to catch up with what Northern Europeans can still claim from their reduced welfare states after the neoliberal reforms of recent decades. An already marked democratic deficit in Europe was further expanded, as the crisis in Greece and Italy ushered in "national unity" governments headed by central bank technocrats, whose mettle was supposed to be tested by whether they could calm German anxieties about "moral hazard"—which would itself largely depend on whether they could "get tough enough with the unions."[18]

The real danger the eurozone crisis poses to global capitalism is that states that had sworn off capital controls forever may be forced by domestic class struggles into adopting them, not least as a way of coping with electoral outcomes that effectively narrow the democratic deficit while expanding economic contradictions. Against this, similar external pressures to those that led most developing states to abjure capital controls for pragmatic rather than ideological reasons in the wake of the Asian crisis . . . are being felt by states in Europe today. Whether changes in the balance of class forces as well as other pragmatic considerations—not only the concern with their own legitimacy, but the accumulating irrationalities of an orthodoxy that demands austerity without much prospect of growth through exports—will instead lead these states to opt for capital controls will be a key sign of whether the American empire is indeed unable to control the spirits it has called up by its spells.

Yet to break with the politics of austerity by defaulting on public debt and adopting capital controls is daunting for any state. This is not only due to the strength of external and internal

capitalist forces that are opposed to it. It is also because the costs for most of its citizens would in fact be severe. The popular sacrifices required would be reduced in any given country were there also to be a shift in the balance of class forces in other countries that would lay the grounds for measures of international solidarity with, rather than retribution against, any state that set out to break with the logic of capitalist financial markets by introducing capital controls. This brings us back to one of the central dilemmas of the revolutionary politics earlier associated with the "uprising of the international proletariat," that is, the very uneven political landscape in the nation-states within which that uprising was politically located (as the very different trajectories of Russia and Germany after World War I made all too clear).

That said, the widespread conviction that global socialism, whether gradually achieved or otherwise, would effectively constitute the alternative to global capitalism remained one of the greatest strengths of the world's proletariat in the middle of the last century. As it turned out, the working-class political institutions that fostered the socialist idea in the twentieth century proved unsuitable for realizing it. Even so, it was only through a long and contradictory path that individualized consumerism rather than collective services and a democratized state and economy became the main legacy of working-class struggles in the twentieth century. Yet capitalism's capacity to sustain this is now in severe doubt, especially when it is put in the context of the ecological limits to capitalist growth. Whether there can be a radical redefinition of socialist politics in the context of new working-class struggles, both in the North and the South, is now on the agenda as never before.

The enormous inequalities as well as insecurities that the state's promotion of capitalist markets engenders within each country, and the protests and even revolts that this provokes, provide fertile ground for replanting the idea of an alternative to global capitalism. For well over a decade before the onset of the current crisis, there were many signs of the exhaustion of popular faith in capitalist markets, and a growing impatience with the political institutions that fostered their globalization. The lesson the World Bank claimed states needed to draw from the 1994 Mexican crisis was that neoliberal reform was "a continuing process which never stops . . . The global economy is a bit like *Alice, Through the Looking Glass*: it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place."[19] It was as an indignant response—initially inspired by the uprising in Chiapas—to such an all-encompassing competitive capitalist logic, that the anti-globalization movement took root in the late 1990s.

A revival of progressive economic nationalism in most developing states today is ruled out by the absence of anything like a national bourgeoisie for popular classes to ally with. This is an old story within the advanced capitalist countries, which increasingly determines just how limited is the room for progressive reform within them. It is thus hardly surprising that the relentless drive to reduce living standards amid this crisis has triggered not only riots but also searches for new forms of collective action and social organization. "They call it the American Dream," read one handmade sign at Occupy Wall Street in October 2011, "because you have to be asleep to believe in it. Wake up!"

Yet the gap that exists between the stubborn realities of capitalism and the revolutionary spirit so manifest in public squares around the world which inspired the occupations in the US itself teaches a sobering lesson. It is not in fact possible to change the world without taking power.[20] It is precisely because the aspiration for a world beyond capitalism is once again so broadly extant today that it is especially useful to recall "one of the basic axioms of historical materialism: that secular struggle between classes is ultimately resolved at the *political*—not at the economic or cultural—level of society."[21] Whether called socialism or not, today's revived demands for social justice and genuine democracy could only be realized through such a fundamental shift of political power, entailing fundamental changes in state as well as class structures. This would need to begin with turning the financial institutions

that are the life-blood of global capitalism into public utilities that would facilitate, within each state, the democratization of the decisions that govern investment and employment. But very different movements and parties from those that carried the socialist impulse in the previous century would be necessary to see this through.[22]

Advancing such a radical politics requires a sober perspective on what currently exists, and how we got here, so as to understand more clearly the nature and scale of the task involved in getting somewhere better. This has been our goal in writing this account of the making of global capitalism. Its unmaking will only be possible if the states that have made it are themselves transformed—and that applies, above all, to the American state.

Notes

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Chapter 25

The Multipolar Moment

Radhika Desai

The multipolar moment of the twenty-first century closes the long chapter in the history of imperialism in which single powers could dominate, or attempt to dominate, the capitalist world order. Successive waves of contender development, of which that of the USSR and communism generally was the strongest, and that of the BRICs and the emerging economies is the latest, spread productive power ever more widely, and by the early twenty-first century had made such dominance impossible. Imperialism has not come to an end: the more powerful states, the poles of the multipolar capitalist world, will still attempt to stall further diminution of the unevenness that favours them by new bouts of contender development. However, their very multiplicity works against them, and accelerates instead an evolution towards ever more numerous and less powerful poles, and a world order in which unevenness becomes progressively less consequential. That it may be neither smooth nor graceful does not make it less inexorable.

. . . something resembling geopolitical economy, perhaps as a further development of the classical theories of imperialism and UCD, would have prevailed after UK world dominance ended in the 30 years' crisis and free trade was dispelled. After all, state-centric understandings of the world economy prevailed in the form of economic nationalist, social democratic and developmental thinking after the Second World War. However, that catastrophe briefly enabled the United States to concentrate such overwhelming economic and political power in itself as to permit it to at least try to realize its ambition to replace the United Kingdom as the 'managing segment' of the world economy. That set in train the developments – historical and intellectual-historical – that would give imperialism the strange afterlife it lived in the repeatedly failing US attempts to sustain the dollar's world role, and the cosmopolitan ideologies – hegemonic stability theory (HST), and later globalization and empire – that accompanied them. Reviewing them in this book has pointed up the important truth that cosmopolitan ideologies – from free trade to 'empire' – were designed to obscure: that the capitalist world order, embodying as it does the contradictions of capitalism, has never been and cannot be a stable system of international economic and monetary governance.

Editor's Note: Desai uses a number of abbreviations she does not spell out. UCD stands for Uneven and Combined Development. IFIH stands for International Financial Intermediation Hypothesis. ERP stands for Economic Report of the President.

THE LIFE AND STRANGE AFTERLIFE OF SINGLE-POWER DOMINANCE

The new account of the geopolitico-economic evolution of the capitalist world order that this book has rescued from cosmopolitan distortions, old and new, can now briefly be resumed.

Contrary to the image of free-trading Britain, which Gerschenkron's idea of 'late development' and debates on British industrial decline reinforced in different ways, the United Kingdom's industrial revolution was fostered through state measures, including protection and imperialism. They were necessary even in a largely pre-capitalist world. After the United Kingdom became the world's dominant industrial power, free trade ideology dissimulated its imperial efforts to keep markets open to its manufactured goods – the trade policy most favourable to the industrially dominant country – and to discourage, and in the case of its colonies prevent, the erection of barriers behind which contenders could industrialize. These efforts were, as Hobson and Luxemburg so clearly saw, rooted in capitalism's endemic demand deficiency.

By dominating the world industrially, the United Kingdom also dominated it commercially, financially and of course militarily. Within the Empire, the United Kingdom could impose one-way free trade on its colonies so they could serve as outlets for surplus UK goods and capital. British imperialism, ironically, created the closest thing the world has ever witnessed to a unified world market. However, large as the empire was, it was not coextensive with the world. Powerful states could and did emerge in territories outside British control to flout free trade and industrialize behind protectionist walls. Industrial development in the United States, Germany and Japan, in particular, fractured the unity of the world market, spread productive power more widely, and eroded the United Kingdom's industrial superiority. We could say that this was, in fact, the original multipolar moment. The world dominance of the first industrial capitalist country was inevitable as long as the world outside it remained pre-capitalist and pre-industrial. By the 1870s such a world had ceased to exist, and now such dominance became impossible. Though the United Kingdom's commercial and financial dominance persisted longer, it too ended in the First World War.

It was probably inevitable that contender states challenging the United Kingdom's singular world dominance would nurture aspirations to emulate it, but equally inevitable that such ambitions would be thwarted. The first wave of contender development had already dispersed productive power too widely to permit any single power to dominate. Moreover, competition between the multiple contenders would expand possibilities for newer contender states' combined development, and further undermine the imperial possibilities available to any one of them.

What complicated such relatively simple unfolding of UCD was not merely that the United States aspired to replace the United Kingdom as the 'managing segment of the world economy', albeit only by making the dollar the world's money in place of sterling, but the wars that, twice, gave it the overwhelming economic and financial superiority which it deployed to the hilt in attempts to achieve that aspiration. Having established the Federal Reserve in 1913 and ensured international acceptance for the dollar, the United States was poised to exploit the opportunities the world wars provided. It entered the First World War to continue to benefit from the bonanza of allied orders, which its banks, backed by the state, also financed, transforming the United States from the world's debtor into its creditor. US insistence on repayment of allied war debts led, in turn, to allied insistence on German reparations payments, and they were then financed from New York. Thus, it was on that tangle

of intergovernmental obligations that the dollar and New York rose to interwar prominence. If the United States had achieved its desire, it was only in a perverse sense, in that sterling and London had presided over private capital flows. The interwar financial merry-go-round was implicated in the Great Depression, which hit the United States the hardest.

However, the Second World War presented a 'second chance'. The boost it gave the US economy as the supplier of war materiel, and the devastation it caused in rival capitalist countries, were both greater, and the United States's economic and financial dominance at the war's end was more overwhelming. This would be the most promising opportunity the United States would have to establish the dollar as the world's money. It defeated proposals for multilateral world economic governance at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference, and insisted on making the gold-backed dollar the world's currency. However, realities would reassert themselves.

. . . the United States could only produce inflationary growth, which widened the trade and current account deficits, and this undermined the dollar's world role . . . Gold outflows had already necessitated the formation of the gold pool to back the dollar in 1961, and a decade later, Nixon accepted the obverse: that US economy could only grow if it gave up trying to maintain the gold-backed dollar's world role. In the interim, the Kennedy–Johnson attempt to finance imperialism through national economic growth had demonstrated the impossibility of the enterprise, as highly inflationary growth not only undermined the dollar further but also exhausted the patience of other capitalist powers with existing monetary arrangements.

The geopolitical economy of the twentieth century also made any attempt to emulate British nineteenth-century world dominance more difficult. UCD had already advanced far enough by the early twentieth century to whittle this emulation down to giving the dollar sterling's old role, a territorial empire being out of the question. However, the former was not possible without the latter. Britain's colonies had been critical to maintaining sterling's world role: they yielded the surpluses that allowed the United Kingdom to export capital and thus provide international liquidity in sterling, not to mention the soldiers to fight far-away colonial wars.

During the First World War, the United States had exported capital to finance its exports for an essentially destructive enterprise which actually decreased its debtors' capacity to pay it back, and in the inter-war period, forced repayments created financial havoc under New York's supervision. In the latter twentieth century, when maintaining high employment levels became a parameter of national economic policy, no national economy, no matter how large, could afford to export capital on anywhere near the scale necessary. Not only was the United States without any colonies to speak of, it wanted to maintain, if not increase, its relative economic size. Worse, capital exports would only finance contender development, as Marshall Plan funds did. And even that meagre capital export had necessitated 'scaring the hell out of the country' and launching the cold war before Congress would approve it.

Moreover, there was also all too much combined development going on in the postwar period. For one thing, communism in Russia, Eastern Europe and China took large swaths of the world out of the ambit of capitalism entirely. Posing a contender threat greater than combined capitalist development, it also forced the United States to encourage combined development among recovering and developing countries, if only to lure them away from communism. And as that proceeded, the United States was simply unable to sustain the gold-backed dollar's world role.

With neither capital exports not deficit-fuelled liquidity provision possible, the dollar could not function stably as the world's money even in the 1950s and 1960s, when it was allegedly 'hegemonic'.

By the time the Nixon government closed the gold window in 1971, the combined development of the recovering economies had resulted in the overcapacity and overproduction to which Brenner attributed the long downturn. It would form the context for the further career of the dollar as the world's currency. The long downturn persisted thanks to the transformed dynamics of postwar geopolitical economy. With the end of formal colonialism, advanced capitalist economies had become much more dependent on demand generated domestically, and on such export markets as they could access though highly political trade negotiations. National economic managers proved unwilling to impose the sort of 'slaughter of capital values' that would be necessary to revive capitalist accumulation in their own economies. For if others did not follow suit, such efforts, rather than leading to a revival of the country's own industry, could end up benefiting capitalists in other countries. In any case, the economic costs of reduced production and the political costs of opposition from both capital and labour in an age of mass politics were too great.

. . . all further attempts to maintain the dollar's world role would now rest on a succession of dollar- and US-centred financializations. HST contributed to making each one credible before it failed, and another became necessary. All these financializations were accompanied by massive trade imbalances which needed to be financed.

The first of the financializations occurred when the United States arranged that OPEC oil surpluses would be recycled through dollar-denominated financial assets. It briefly stabilized the dollar's world role by making it indispensable for financing the major international trade and financial imbalance of the time, that between oil exporters and importers. To do so, it directed incoming capital outwards to the developing and communist world and, uniquely among the dollar-centred financializations since 1971, financed industrialization there. All later financializations would strangle growth in most parts of the world, and direct capital into the United States instead. Since thanks to the long downturn it could not be employed productively there, it could only result in asset-price bubbles: the stock market bubbles that burst in 1987 and 2000, and the housing and associated credit bubbles that burst in 2008.

Geopolitical Economy's account of the financializations that were necessary to undergird the dollar's world role sheds a special light on the broader phenonmenon of financialization. First, while financialization did affect all countries to some extent, it had a distinct geography and financial structure. The United States, and the United Kingdom which appeared in a special supporting role in each financialization, were the most financialized economies, and the financializations themselves were overwhelmingly US-driven and dollar-centred processes. They linked the US economy's increasingly perverse growth processes with the maintenance of the dollar's world role. The role ensured that the growth processes would remain perverse because underlying competitiveness problems would remain unresolved, and this perversity would eventually catch up with each financialization.

Second, neither any single financialization nor financialization in general occurred because money is inherently 'fungible' and uncontrollable. They occurred because successive US governments, aided by UK governments, pursued policies and strategies to create and maintain them. The key aim of these policies was to support the dollar by creating the level of dollar-denominated liquidity that would preserve its status of the dollar as a reserve currency. That is why debates about whether the 2008 financial crisis was caused by the errors of bankers or their regulators miss a critical point. While the financial institutions were hardly blameless, the unsustainable financial practices that they pursued were practically mandated by the policies pursued by US economic managers, pre-eminently the Fed, to keep capital flowing into the US economy, to maintain consumption- and credit-fuelled growth, and ensure international confidence in the dollar by keeping the house price and mortgage

bubbles growing. The competitive processes they unleashed drove bankers to throw ever larger and ever more leveraged sums into increasingly risky investments to make ever-thinner profit margins. . . .

HST had emerged amid the declinism that gathered over the closing of the gold window, defeat in Vietnam and economic malaise, to retrospectively discern US hegemony and by the late 1980s renewalists began to argue that it has been restored. However, well into the 1990s the economy remained too troubled – dipping to historic lows in the late 1970s and early 1990s – for renewalism to take hold. In closing the gold window, the Nixon Administration had not assumed, per the IFIH, that private confidence would hold the dollar's value up. Rather it was acutely aware that the mercantilism of its actions could spell the end of the dollar's world role. Only a major currency intervention and then the agreement to recycle OPEC oil surpluses stabilized the dollar. But even so, by the late 1970s the United States needed the cooperation of other major industrial economies in regular G-7 meetings to stabilize exchange rates and maintain growth, and the second oil shock sent the dollar plunging again. The new Fed chariman, Paul Volcker, jacked up interest rates to double digits to shore up the dollar, and 'declinism' peaked with Jimmy Carter's 'malaise' speech, proposing to scale down the US world role and increase competitiveness so Americans could earn their keep.

Ronald Reagan's election set the United States back on the rocky path of maintaining the dollar's world role, but his neoliberal, monetarist and supply-side economics failed to do so. Amid high interest rates, the government generated growth through the massive fiscal stimuli of tax cuts for the wealthy, and recharged military Keynesianism and military Schumpeterianism. With the United States's fundamental competitiveness problems remaining unresolved, growth widened not only trade deficits but now also budget deficits. The dollar only remained strong because capital flowed into the United States thanks to Volcker's high interest rates, third-world debt repayments, capital flight from Europe, and Japanese financing of US deficits in return for access to US markets. These capital inflows constituted a second major burst of dollar-denominated financialization. They sent the dollar so high above its value that manufacturers pressured to bring it down, as did leading policy makers worried that it might suffer a catastrophic uncontrolled fall. The 1985 Plaza Accord organized controlled dollar depreciation. The dollar's decade-long decline was helped along its way when the US stock market bubble burst in 1987. For despite Reagan's fiscal stimulus, the US economy could only absorb so much capital: the rest inflated the stock market bubble. After it burst, the new Fed chairman's 'Greenspan put' – the provision of extra liquidity to financial markets amid crises – was widely credited with averting a recession, though none actually occurred because the stock market bubble was unconnected with the productive economy.

As the dollar declined, it briefly indicated the direction US economic fundamentals could really sustain. Higher demand for US exports combined with slower growth limiting imports helped close the US trade deficit briefly in the early 1990s. If imperial aspirations were forsaken in favour of a determined state effort to revive productivity and competitiveness, prosperity could have been had. It was not to be. By the time communism collapsed, the US economy was in the doldrums and the president and party that 'won' the cold war were defeated in the 'It's the economy, stupid!' election.

The stage was now set for globalization's strange trajectory. During Clinton's campaign the word referred to competitive threats to be countered with a strategy for higher-value production and trade promotion aimed at the 'big emerging markets' (BEMs). This soberly productive Reichian vision gave way to the heady Stiglitzian financial brew focused on opening capital markets around the world, after Clinton was re-elected and his earlier programme

was eclipsed by the deficit reduction, higher interest rates and the high dollar favoured by the financial interests that stood behind him. After briefly taking a centripetal form, with securitized short-term capital flowing outwards from the United States to BEMs which had been persuaded to lift capital controls, and causing the series of financial crises that culminated in the massive 1997–8 East Asian crisis, international capital flows turned centrifugal, pouring into the United States.

Only then did the geopolitical economy of globalization – in which the US-centred international financial system sucked in capital from around the world and poured it into the United States, particularly the US stock market – compose itself fully. The word acquired its more familiar meaning of the desirability and inevitability of a unified world economy, and in particular, a unified world capital market, which was fully expressed in ERP, 1997. These flows, particularly of private capital into the US stock market, were further encouraged by Greenspan's tall tales about the new economy and its 'productivity miracle'. The result, the real and intended result of globalization as it came into its own in the late 1990s, was the stock market bubble and associated consumption and investment booms. When the stock market bubble burst in 2000, the main motor of globalization fell silent.

Empire proved the last and most desperate form of US imperial mimesis, and the financialization that accompanied it was the biggest ever. Having taken office with something like the war on terrorism already on its agenda, the Bush Jr Administration used the cue of 9/11 to indulge in the greatest military spending spree ever, on the back of a US economy less prepared than ever to support it.

The Fed had become the main manager of the US economy since Clinton's turn to deficit reduction, and the Bush Jr Administration with its one-point agenda of tax cuts was not about to change that. Amid the recession that accompanied the stock market crash, the Fed recognized that credit-fuelled consumption among the upper income groups who had been enjoying the wealth effects of a housing bubble inflating since the mid-1990s was the only source of growth. It committed itself to inflating it further as the only way to growth, and brought interest rates down to their 1 per cent floor of the early 2000s. Even so, this growth relied on foreign funds flowing in to finance the United States's ever-widening deficits and support the dollar.

A new series of discourses emerged to explain away the risky financial structure that was fuelling the housing bubble (the wonders of 'financial innovation'), the US economy's reliance on rock-bottom interest rates (the 'danger of deflation'), its inability to grow fast despite them (the 'great moderation'), and the manifest obscenity of the world's capital financing consumption, predominantly of the rich, in one of the world's richest societies, rather than much-needed developing world production (the 'global savings glut'). The capital inflows not only financed the United States's deficits cheaply, they also expanded the volume of dollar-denominated financial activity on which the downward-sliding dollar's liquidity depended. The bulk of these flows came from the rest of the advanced industrial world, particularly Europe: not East Asia, as commonly assumed.

Talk could, of course, postpone the inevitable only so long, and when it came, it did so in a form that vindicated UCD. For neither US power nor all the cosmopolitan discourses it could generate had succeeded in preventing further combined development and growth in the emerging economies, particularly China, which began to push commodity prices up and the dollar down. The high interest rates that were now necessary triggered the bursting of the housing bubble, thus ending the consumption-led growth and the international capital inflows it had supported.

Beginning in 2007, for the second time in less than a century, the United States led a massive economic downturn. For a second time financial networks centred on New York

transmitted its effects around the world, and for a second time its causes were deeply intertwined with US imperial ambition and the impossibility of its realization in a world subject to UCD. But whereas the Great Depression was ended by a war that boosted US power enough to bring it closer to achieving its imperial ambition than it would ever be, the Great Recession happened because UCD forced certain policy decisions, critically the raising of interest rates beginning in 2004, and created certain conditions, most importantly the rise in long-term interest rates beginning in 2007. These brought down the last and most fragile financialization that sustained the dollar's world role. The 2008 financial crisis spelled its end. Whether it is long-drawn-out or rapid, it cannot be avoided. The dollar had never had a stable basis, and with the greater advance of UCD and multipolarity, the United States cannot furnish even another unstable and volatile one.

THE MULTIPOLAR FUTURE

Crises proverbially bring opportunities, and this one brings them in spades, although opportunities not seized also contain risks. The present multipolar moment contains more hopeful possibilities than even the end of the Second World War. Then the inordinate power that war gave the United States set the world on a long detour from the sort of international world of multilateral economic governance which contemporaries had looked forward to, and which Keynes's original proposals had sought to realize. When the 2008 financial crisis ended that detour, history finally caught up with Keynes's far-sighted vision (Desai, 2009). That vision was of a world in which the economic roles of states have legitimacy and are reinforced by the institutions of international economic governance. Such a relegitimization of states' economic roles is necessary before they can be oriented toward popular interests and even socialism. During the decades when neoliberal and cosmopolitan ideologies undermined that legitimacy, states did not stop intervening in and shaping economies, they simply did so overwhelmingly in the interests of the propertied classes. Naturally they also became less democratic. They must now be made more so, and made to intervene in economies in the popular interest if the unequal and unproductive financialized economic patterns of recent decades that are so destructive of nature and second nature (culture) are to be transformed in egalitarian, productive, green and culturally dynamic directions.

Such a reinstatement of states' economic roles will mark the end of the long period when imperialism, accomplished or attempted, sought to write the economic role of states out of the script of geopolitical economy for reasons already discussed. No doubt the more powerful states will continue to attempt to influence less powerful ones to their own advantage, and imperialism is a term too loosely used to rule out the possibility that the ideas and concepts associated with it will shed light on such actions. However, if this book has been at all persuasive, the need to understand how historical circumstances expand or contract the scope of its operation and change its nature should also be clear.

States will have to play the economic roles that are critical for resolving the problems of the long downturn. The overcapacity and overproduction that have plagued it can be resolved in one of, or a combination of, two ways. The first is, as the Carter Administration along with the rest of the world had briefly glimpsed, an expansion of demand in the developing world. To a great extent, the state-led combined development in emerging economies is already creating it, and modelling it for the rest of the developing world. Early on in the crisis, some speculated that the emerging economies, especially China, would emerge as the new growth motor of the world economy. Such a view implies that the emerging economies would open themselves to absorbing goods and capital from elsewhere, as the United States did over recent decades. This is neither possible nor desirable. However, the expansion of

demand within emerging economies, combined with more or less balanced trade with the rest of the world, does carry the most favourable prospect for productive and egalitarian growth patterns in these economies.

The other way is particularly applicable to the developed world, but by no means without relevance to the more successful and prosperous emerging economies. In societies that are prosperous in the aggregate, and where capitalism has only delivered financialization and inequality over the past three decades, growth patterns that increase egalitarianism and aim at 'sustainability and the full development of human creativity' (Chick and Freeman; 2012; see also Freeman, 2009; Bakshi, Desai and Freeman, 2009) combined with egalitarian redistribution can be prioritized. It would be based on the recognition that, in the rich countries at least, the resumption of growth on the pattern of the long boom is neither possible under capitalist conditions, nor desirable. There is also no reason to doubt that such a society and political economy based on expanding ecological and cultural activities which deliver value in new and desirable ways would be closer to, and provide a transition to, socialism.

The crisis has done considerable work: it has put old ideologies, policies and institutions into question. However, the destructive work of crises only takes us so far. The full realization of the possibilities outlined above depends on popular mobilizations that are organized to take and use state power, motivated to exercise it in the interests of the broadest possible constituencies, and informed by an analysis of the problems and possibilities of the current momentous historical conjuncture. Such mobilizations do not usually erupt, fully formed, on the morrow of crises.

It took more than a year after the financial crisis hit for major signs of popular unrest and mobilization to emerge. The Eurozone crisis that began in early 2010 generated considerable unrest, leading to a major electoral upset in Ireland in 2010, and 2011 opened with the wave of protests that inaugurated the Arab Spring (a sure sign that the United States had lost its grip in the Middle East). Protests then spread to the United Kingdom and elsewhere in Europe, and by autumn 2011, the Occupy protests had erupted in the United States. Powerful economic concerns underlay them all. However, the political organization necessary to translate popular concerns and interests into a viable national economic plan seemed more or less universally absent. That does not mean, however, that things are back to pre-crisis business as usual.

True, incumbent governments of the advanced industrial countries most severely affected by the crisis simply imposed costly burdens on ordinary people to give financial capital the aid it demanded for being too big to fail. This happened nowhere more than in the American epicentre of the crisis. However, it remained unclear whether this aid restored financial capital's former dominance. While international capital flows as a percentage of world GDP collapsed in 2008 and 2009 and then revived, they remained until 2010 at least at less than a third of their pre-crisis volumes (Borio and Disyatat, 2011: 14). The size of the bailouts financial institutions had received in affected countries naturally renationalized finance considerably, as did new financial regulation and tangled questions about the relevant lender of last resort for financial institutions' foreign operations.

In contrast to European banks which were asked to take sizeable 'haircuts' – to discount their assets substantially – amid the Eurozone crisis, US banks enjoyed considerably better treatment, but its price will yet be paid in a reduced role for the dollar as it drops in value thanks to the vast increase in US debt, and as some of the more attractive investment destinations become increasingly averse to US financial institutions pushing short-term funds into them and resort to capital controls. Financial institutions, especially the well-bailed-out US financial institutions, are once again engaged in speculation, particularly in commodity markets, raising the question of whether the next crisis will not find them too big to bail out

by governments already laden down by debts incurred in previous bailouts, even if popular opinion did not already rule that out as an option. It is also unclear whether the policies of austerity dictated by finance can actually serve its interests if they merely prolong the great recession, as they appear set to do.

The emerging economies are growing strongly, but they will only continue to do so if they limit their reliance on stagnant Western markets by establishing alternative trading arrangements and expanding their internal markets. While there is considerable evidence that the Chinese government is aware of, and acting on, this front, other governments may still be trapped in yesteryear's growth-limiting models. Just as historically workers' struggles were central to expanding domestic markets in the advanced industrial countries, today they are necessary in emerging and developing economies. And if these economies are to construct an alternative and progressive political agenda, the dubious but still lingering cosmopolitan ideologies that created and supported today's discredited national and international structures of privilege and promise to prolong the crisis must be dispelled.

For it shows that capitalism does not, cannot and has never relied on a strict demarcation between the state and market. Not only have states played central roles in capitalist economies, one could argue that their actions – such as imperialism or welfare states – have been critical to creating capitalist booms. What makes a given society capitalist is not that the state stays out of the economy, but that its economic role favours capital over labour on balance. However, this can last only as long as the capitalist class is better organized behind strategies that deliver relatively stable growth, or the working classes remain unorganized. Today, in the advanced countries at least, the policies that financialized capitalist classes favour are deeply contradictory, incapable of delivering even what they want.

In the past, working people have scored historic successes in exploiting the opportunities of mass politics to bend state action in their favour. Their gains may have given capitalism greater stability, for instance by expanding domestic markets, but they also changed national capitalisms into something much more tolerable. Moreover, the reforms that working classes won also resourced them better to demand more, leaving open the possibility that regulated national capitalisms might become transitions to socialisms. There is no inherent reason why working people should not match and surpass those historic achievements.

Therefore, the apparently radical idea that reforms are useless since the capitalist state cannot be reformed, only overthrown by 'revolution' in ways that are never specified, is actually profoundly conservative. Without a credible conception of how people might expect to achieve such a revolutionary overthrow, it simply derides the reforms they are able to achieve. Instead, we need to recognize that reforms enable working people to build more just societies, and through multilateral international action, for constructing a more just international order.

In recent decades left and progressive intellectuals agreed with the globalization and empire analyses, and even espoused them all the more ardently to demonstrate the power and exploitative nature of capitalism. In doing so, however, they too wrote the state's economic role out of the script of capitalism, and of any viable strategy for socialism. It is time to take stock of the real basis of these cosmopolitan ideologies, and appreciate once more that the state was and remains central to capitalism. This is capitalism's political Achilles' heel. A strategy of reforms forcing states to serve the interests of working people and democratizing them so they contribute to strengthening working people's power and organization is a viable strategy for meaningful reform and even, potentially, revolution leading beyond capitalism (Patnaik, 2009b). The distinction between the two does not rest on the nature of the demands: whether given demands are reformist or revolutionary depends on whether the ruling classes are willing and able to fulfil them, and if not, whether popular forces are

sufficiently organized to realize the demands themselves and take on the inevitable opposition to their doing so.

It is true that, historically, combined development has tended to take authoritarian forms in both its capitalist and communist versions (on the latter see Lewin 1995's explanation of the authoritarianism of the Soviet state). However, in good part this was because of the persistence of the power of older landed elites, or imperialist machinations. The power of such forces has now waned, and moreover, working classes are simply a much larger social force throughout the world. The historical record is not without instances where democracy and developmental states have creatively intertwined (White, 2006; Robinson and White, 1998).

Nowhere is the need for mobilization for popular demands clearer than in the United States. In pursuit of imperial ambitions, US governments jettisoned the toolkit of combined development with the partial and rather perverse exceptions of military Keynesianism and military Schumpeterianism. So such attempts as it made to improve its economic performance were made, as it were, with one hand tied behind its back. They failed its manufacturing sector, its international competitiveness, the skills of its working people and the integration of its marginalized minorities, particularly black and Hispanic. There is a wide range of policy options available for addressing these problems, but to avail itself of them the US government will need to abandon the economically liberal ideological straitjacket of the vainly imperial decades. Ross Perot's surprisingly successful third candidacy in the 1992 presidential elections broke out of this straitjacket from the right. The left has yet to show that it can do so.

When it does, the United States will be better able to come to terms with its status as one national economy among many, albeit a large and potentially very dynamic one, and support rather than vainly trying to thwart the underlying trend towards ever greater multilateralism (Ruggie, 1992). The replacement of the G-7 by the G-20 was an important recent marker, and while it remains true that the G-20 is not the G-192, just as the enfranchisement of capitalist classes and their mutual competition made political openings for working-class political assertion in so many capitalist countries historically, this widening of the circle of countries involved in world economic governance beyond the formerly imperial powers cannot but open up spaces for the assertion of the interests of countries farther down the geopolitico-economic hierarchy.

While the rest of the world has long resented US imperial attempts, and done much to counteract and undermine them, Americans themselves have so far been slow to count the cost they themselves have paid for their governments' imperial pursuits, let alone those they inflicted on others. These costs were mainly not those of the military build-up and wars, although these costs were substantial. The greater price came from the neglect of the US economy's productivity and competitiveness, and the pursuit of financialization. Exactly how the United States's imperial pursuits – its military misadventures and support for dollar-denominated financial capital – will be wound down is impossible to predict. But if an upsurge of popular anger such as the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement, but socially even wider and deeper, plays a central role, the American people will have reclaimed the respect and affection of the rest of the world that their governments have done so much to squander.

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Chapter 26

The New Imperialism

David Harvey

To accomplish my immediate goal of explaining why Iraq, and why then, I had to offer an interim account of how the war came about even though much was unclear. Some things have now been clarified. The weapons of mass destruction (the primary reason given for a pre-emptive strike) were no threat and nothing substantial has been found. The supposed connection of Saddam to al Qaeda and 9/11 did not exist. There were serious problems with intelligence. The 9/11 Commission hearings and reports and the US Senate Report on Intelligence, along with the Hutton and Butler inquiries in Britain, document how raw, weak, and often unverified intelligence was used to justify the decision to go to war. Political pressure from governments obviously played a role, but the political decision-making has not been scrutinized with the same diligence as intelligence failures. The systematic evasions on this point in both Britain and the US suggest there is much to hide. In any case, the intelligence services did not send their countries to war—the politicians did. And in the US the neo-conservatives had long wanted to invade Iraq. The broader claims—that the aim was to democratize the whole region; that past favours extended to undemocratic regimes would cease; that there was an overwhelming concern for human rights—are contradicted by continuing US support (backed by military presence) for violently oppressive regimes elsewhere and the unquestioning support for a brutal Israeli military policy towards the Palestinians.

As time went on, both Bush and Blair fell back on the argument that ridding the world of a brutal dictator by force was a morally correct thing to do, that 'history' would judge them to have been right. Bush, in particular, became insistent that the gift of freedom to Iraq was justification enough. 'Freedom', he asserted, 'is the Almighty's gift to every man and woman in this world', and 'as the greatest power on earth we have an obligation to help the spread of freedom'.[1] Taken literally, this would entail a series of pre-emptive liberatory wars from Saudi Arabia, Zimbabwe, and Pakistan to China.

But, as Matthew Arnold long ago observed, 'freedom is a very good horse to ride, but to ride somewhere'.[2] So where, then, were the Iraqis supposed to ride their horse of freedom? The US answer to that question was given on 19 September 2003, when Paul Bremer, head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, promulgated a series of decrees which included 'the full privatization of public enterprises, full ownership rights by foreign firms of Iraqi businesses, full repatriation of foreign profits . . . the opening of Iraq's banks to foreign control, national treatment for foreign companies and . . . the elimination of nearly all trade barriers'.[3] The orders were to apply to all areas of the economy. Only oil was exempt (presumably because of its special status and geopolitical significance). A flat tax (a regressive taxation system much favoured by certain neo-conservatives in the US) was imposed. Strikes were outlawed, and rights to unionize much restricted.

This imposition of what the London *Economist* called a 'capitalist dream' regime upon Iraq drew some criticism. Iraq's interim trade minister attacked the imposition of 'free market fundamentalism', describing it as 'a flawed logic that ignores history'. The perception that the US was out to 'loot Iraq' (a vicious case of accumulation by dispossession if ever there was one) gained credibility as the 'Iraq Reconstruction Bonanza' got under way, to the great benefit of US corporations. Iraqi national assets were being, in effect, auctioned off to foreigners at fire-sale prices. Bremer's decrees violated the Geneva and Hague Conventions as to the proper role to be assumed by any occupying power.[4] The US refusal to proceed to direct elections in Iraq in part derived from its desire to work with an appointed interim government that would legally lock in these free market reforms before direct democracy (which would likely reject them) could be established. While 'full sovereignty' was nominally granted to the hand-picked interim government that took power at the end of June 2004 as the price of gaining a supportive UN resolution, the transitional agreement states that it can pass no substantive new laws, only confirm existing decrees. The new leadership, with a long history of connections to the CIA, seems unlikely to challenge the free market fundamentalism that the US has imposed.[5]

One of the big question marks at the time of invasion was whether it would be understood as liberation or occupation. It quickly became clear that it was mainly understood as occupation. In the eyes of serious historians, an elementary knowledge of the whole colonial history and its aftermath in the Middle East doomed it to be seen so from the very start. Every foreign power that has ventured into the region has proclaimed liberation as its aim and then behaved as a violent occupier.[6] Far more US soldiers have died since Bush landed on an aircraft carrier on 1 May 2003 under the banner sign of 'mission accomplished'. The US turn to more brutal tactics of repression in Iraq (tactics which echoed those of the Israelis against the Palestinians) spawned ever larger swaths of resistance. 'With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money for projects', said a US commander on the ground during this phase of the occupation, 'I think we can convince these people that we are here to help them'. Such tactics plainly failed, and the myth of benevolent military occupation was irreversibly punctured by the scandals of prisoner abuse in Abu Ghraib.[7]

The result has been a steadily increasing willingness in the US to question the motives for invasion as well as the appalling lack of planning for post-war reconstruction of Iraq. It even produced some extraordinary *mea culpa*s on the part of the mainstream press, which confessed it had failed in its duty to provide critical analysis of the run-up to war.[8] And in Michael Moore's *Fahrenheit 9/11* it produced a devastating polemic not only against the Bush administration but also against the class and corporate interests that lay behind it in promoting the war.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of my argument, however, was that the US is operating more from a stance of economic and political weakness than one of strength, and that the Iraq venture may well signal the end of hegemony rather than the beginning of a phase of US global domination. Only time will tell whether I am right. But the possibility and potential consequences of imminent US decline as a hegemonic power need to be confronted. While I still stand by the general thrust of my argument, it needs further elaboration.

I begin with the fact that much of the world's research and development is done in the US. This gives it a sustained technological advantage, and biases the global paths of technological change towards its own interests (particularly those centred in the military-industrial complex). It generates a flow of technological rents from the rest of the world into the US economy. The US insistence on the international protection of intellectual property rights (for example proprietary drugs) is designed to secure this 'rentier' status. The relative strength of

the Asian economies has not in the past depended upon their ability to innovate (Japan, Taiwan, and, to a lesser extent, Korea have been partial exceptions). These economies specialized in taking innovations emanating from the US and using their labour resources and organizational skills to put the new systems into production at a far lower cost and at a far higher level of efficiency. Much of the world has been, therefore, dependent upon the US for technological innovation. This enables the US to define major innovative shifts (much as it did with the high-tech industries of the much-touted 'new economy' of the 1980s and 1990s) and so lead the world once more on a merry dance of new technological wizardry. But it is not clear where a new wave of innovation will come from (though biotechnology and medical technology are leading candidates). And while the US lead in technological innovation still remains substantial (thanks in large part to its research universities), there are many signs that it is declining. Patents granted to foreigners in the US rose from 40 per cent to nearly 50 per cent between 1980 and 2003, and a wide range of indicators, such as foreign authorship of papers in science and engineering, Nobel prizes awarded to citizens of other countries than the US, and foreign research students (particularly from India, Taiwan, and China) electing to return home rather than stay in the US, suggest a trend towards declining US dominance. In certain areas (particularly of a non-military sort) Europe and Asia are pulling ahead of the US. In the last few years more than 400 foreign firms, such as General Electric and British Petroleum (from many different countries, including the US, Japan, Germany, Britain, Korea, and Taiwan), have set up large research institutes in China, taking advantage of a highly educated labour force as well as a huge market where experimentation with new products is relatively easy and potentially very profitable. The US, while still a redoubtable player, is no longer as dominant in research and development as it once was.[9]

Questions have also been posed as to how serious the loss of manufacturing jobs has been for US economic power. What if much of the world's manufacturing is controlled by US corporations operating overseas? Many major industries are in fact now dominated by non-US companies, which account for 'nine of the ten largest electronics and electrical equipment manufacturers; eight of the ten largest motor vehicle makers and electric and gas utilities; seven of the largest ten petroleum refiners; six of ten telecommunications companies; five of ten pharmaceutical firms; four of six chemical producers . . . '[10] US-based manufacturing corporations simply do not rule the roost in the way they once did. They do, however, repatriate substantial profits from their overseas ventures. The rate of profit on overseas investments is far higher than domestic rates of return. As Dumenil and Levy show, US corporations have been very efficient at pumping excess profits from the rest of the world back into the US economy.[11]

Does this return flow compensate for job losses in the US? Unfortunately, most of it benefits the already wealthy through dividend payments and stock appreciations. This exacerbates the incredible class biases already built in to the US social structure. Much of the US population is now dependent, therefore, upon the consumption habits of the upper income brackets. The effect is to generate a lot of low-paying service jobs, a kind of servant class for the upper classes who rule economically and dominate government through their campaign contributions. The 2 million or so manufacturing jobs lost in the US in the last three years paid more than $17 an hour (often with benefits such as health care), while the service jobs that partially compensated for that loss pay only $14 an hour (usually without benefits). Some service jobs are now even moving offshore: India is taking up US white-collar jobs in everything from software production and computer servicing to airline ticketing and corporate and government billing services.[12]

Much has been made of the transfer of jobs overseas and its impact upon employment in the US. But only 30 per cent of the 2 million manufacturing job losses experienced there

between 2000 and 2003 was due to outsourcing overseas. Roughly 40 per cent was attributable to rising productivity at home, and the remaining 30 per cent was accounted for by the onset of recession.[13] Superior and ever-increasing productivity in everything from retailing and services to agriculture and the manufacture of earth-moving equipment keeps the US competitive in areas it might otherwise have lost. But the downside is that technologically induced unemployment and job insecurity become a chronic problem for the working and middle classes (this was true even during the 'prosperous' 1990s when productivity rose rapidly[14]).

These forces continue to play out and account for the slow rate of working-class job and income creation within the US. The relative loss of manufacturing capacity constitutes, I conclude, a serious drag upon the well-being of the mass of the US population and makes the US vulnerable to foreign competition even as the upper income brackets benefit greatly from their foreign investments.

The role of relentless US consumerism is an equally tricky question. It gives a substantial advantage to the US in cutting bilateral trade deals because privileged access to the huge US market means a great deal, particularly to smaller states (such as Chile or Taiwan). The dependence of the rest of the world on the US consumer market is certainly an important feature in global power relations. But the recent bout of US consumerism has been almost entirely debt-financed. It has brought the internal net savings rate down close to zero (perhaps even negative when we take into account the way in which recent consumerism has been underpinned by refinancing mortgage debt on inflated housing prices). It has also been class-biased, since US consumerism rests more and more on the consumption habits of the top 10 per cent of the US population, which is where wealth and income are hugely concentrated. The habit of spending beyond one's means played a key role in keeping the US economy afloat during the recent recession.[15] While much of this consumerism can be attributed to an insatiable appetite for consumer goods, more and more of it is powered by necessity. Many of those who cashed in their mortgages to augment their incomes did so to confront the rising costs of health care, the loss of medical insurance, and the need to pay for education.

It is the free fall into indebtedness that lies at the heart of the US problem. The financial picture there continues to deteriorate apace. Even Robert Rubin, the former Treasury Secretary in the Clinton administration, as well as IMF economists, in a most unusual move, have openly criticized US fiscal policies as a serious threat to global stability.[16] Personal indebtedness is escalating, and government budgets at all levels are suffering such that services and public investments are under assault. The federal government is resorting to unheard-of levels of fiscal irresponsibility, and even with a modicum of economic recovery the prospect of avoiding fiscal shipwreck in the next decade given current policies is negligible. Such policies seem incomprehensible unless understood as a deliberate drive on the part of neo-conservative ideologues to deliberately force the whole structure of public financing into such a huge crisis that the government is forced to renege on all of its social obligations (such as Social Security and Medicare). This will complete their long-standing project (David Stockman, budget director in the early 1980s, details how it worked in the early years of the Reagan administration) of shrinking government power (except with respect to the military) to the point where it 'can be drowned in a bath-tub'.[17]

The spiralling deficits in the US cannot be sustained without either default or falling into a chronic state of dependency upon foreign largesse. Already some 40 per cent of US treasuries and one-fifth of Wall Street assets are foreign-owned. I erroneously put the daily inflow of capital to cover the current account deficit at $2 billion: it is actually a mere $1.5 billion a day and rising! The central banks of Japan, Taiwan, and China do much to cover the deficit.

The only other solution would be to use the US power of seignorage (printing dollars) to pay back the debt in devalued dollars: but that would mean a radical bout of inflation at home and a collapse of the dollar in international markets far beyond its current loss of value against the euro. In this arena the collapse of US power seems imminent unless there is some radical change of course away from the suicidal path the US government has been taking.

Regime change in Washington could, at least on this point, make a substantial difference. But, as I argue in the main text, the only way for capitalism to restabilize itself short of a major crisis, is to create some sort of 'new' New Deal. I do not regard this as any sort of permanent solution to the difficulties of global capitalism. But it could provide a breathing space from which other options might peacefully emerge. The difficulties facing such a politics in the US are formidable. It would entail reversing twenty years of neo-liberalism that have fundamentally restored class power to a small elite. The top 1 per cent of income-earners in the US claimed less than 8 per cent of the national income in 1980, but this had risen to 15 per cent by 2000, and with the Bush tax cuts will probably hit the 20 per cent mark by 2005. The top 0.1 per cent raised its share of the national income from 2 per cent to over 6 per cent between 1979 and 1998. This affluent elite of CEOs and financiers wields a wildly disproportionate influence over the political process.[18] Both political parties are beholden to it, and there is little likelihood that the redistributive politics required to gain reasonable access for all to health care, education, social security, and well-paying jobs will emerge. The only substantive difference between the political parties on this point is that the Republicans are beholden to a culturally nationalist and Christian fundamentalist white working class that is consistently persuaded to vote against its own material interests for cultural reasons, whereas the Democrats will be forced to pay attention to a more left-leaning constituency that is acutely aware of its material interests. How far the Democrats might move will be determined by the vigour with which social movements pursue their objectives. Redistributions will not be willingly donated. They will have to be fought for every inch of the way.

. . . it is very important to emphasize the volatility. Historically we have seen phases of relative stability (for example during much of the Cold War) but then phases of huge uncertainty in which all manner of rapid reconfigurations and realignments can occur. During such phases it is very difficult to predict outcomes. Who would have predicted an inter-capitalist war in 1928? Who would have predicted the sudden (and, in the event, the largely peaceful) break-up of the Soviet Union in 1985? Who would have predicted four years ago that war with Iraq was imminent? And the US is highly vulnerable. Even its vaunted military power is in question. The US may dominate in remote-controlled destructive power, but it simply has not got the will or the resources to sustain a long-term military occupation on the ground.

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Chapter 27

The Twin Towers as Metaphor

Immanuel Wallerstein

I. AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

O beautiful for patriot dream
That sees beyond the years
Thine alabaster cities gleam
Undimmed by human tears!
America! America!
God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

—Katherine Lee Bales,
"America the Beautiful"

On October 24, 1990, I was invited to give the opening lecture of the Distinguished Speakers Series in celebration of the bicentennial of the University of Vermont. I entitled that lecture "America and the World: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow."[1] In that talk I discussed God's blessings to America: in the present, prosperity; in the past, liberty; in the future, equality. Somehow God had not distributed these blessings to everyone everywhere. I noted that Americans were very conscious of this unequal distribution of God's grace. I said that the United States had always defined itself, had always measured its blessings, by the yardstick of the world. We are better; we were better; we shall be better. Perhaps blessings that are universal are not considered true blessings. Perhaps we impose upon God the requirement that She save only a minority.

Today, we live in the shadow of an event that has shaken most of us, the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001, by a group of individuals so dedicated to their ideology and their moral fury at the United States that they conspired for years to find ways to deal a deadly geopolitical blow to America and those they deemed its supporters around the world, and did this in a way that required sacrificing their own lives. Most Americans have reacted to the events with deep anger, with patriotic resolve, and yet with considerable and persistent puzzlement. Puzzlement about two things: Why did this happen? And how could it happen? And the puzzlement has been laced with a good deal of uncertainty: What must be done, what can be done in order that such an event will not, could not, happen again?

As I look back on what I said eleven years ago, I do not wish to change anything I said then. But I do feel a bit of unease about the stance from which I spoke. I wrote as though I were an ethnographer from elsewhere, from Mars, perhaps, trying to understand this curious species, *Humanus americanus*. Today, I think that is not good enough. I am to be sure a

human being, and am concerned with the fate of humanity. But I am also an American citizen. I was born here. I have lived here most of my life. And I share full responsibility, along with everyone else in my position, for what has happened here and what will happen here. I have a moral obligation to view America from inside.

So I wish to look at America and the world a second time. But this time I do not want to look at how Americans see themselves through the prism of the world, but rather at how Americans have seen the world, and how Americans might wish to see the world from here on in. And I am very aware that here I tread on contentious ground.

It is a rare president of the United States, in the twentieth century at least, who has not at some point made the statement that the United States is the greatest country in the world. I'm not sure our omnipresent public opinion polling agencies have ever put the question directly to the American public, but I suspect that the percentage of the U.S. population that would agree with such a statement is very large indeed. I ask you to reflect on how such a statement sounds, not merely to persons from poor countries with cultures that are very different from ours but to our close friends and allies—to Canadians, to the English, and of course to the French. Does Tony Blair think the United States is the greatest country in the world, greater than Great Britain? Would he dare think that? Does Pope John Paul II think it? Who, besides Americans and those who wish to migrate to the United States, believe this?

Nationalism is of course not a phenomenon limited to people in the United States. The citizens of almost every country are patriotic and often chauvinistic. Americans are aware of that, no doubt. But they nonetheless tend to note the fact that many people across the world wish to emigrate to the United States, and that no other locus of immigration seems to be quite as popular, and they take this as confirmation of their belief in America's superior virtue as a nation.

But in what do we consider that our superior virtue consists? I think that Americans tend to believe that others have *less* of many things than we have, and the fact that we have more is a sign of grace. I shall thus try to elaborate the many arenas in which this concept of "lessness" may be thought to exist. I shall start with the one arena about which most Americans seem to be quite sure. Other countries are less modern, the meaning of modernity being the level of technological development. The United States has the most advanced technology in the world. This technology is located in the gadgets found in our homes across the country, in the networks of communications and transport, in the infrastructure of the country, in the instruments of space exploration, and of course in the military hardware that is available to our armed forces. As a result of this accumulation of technology, Americans consider that life in the United States is more comfortable, that our production competes more successfully in the world market, and that therefore we are certain to win the wars into which others may drag us.

Americans also consider their society to be more efficient. Things run more smoothly—at the workplace, in the public arena, in social relations, in our dealings with bureaucracies. However great our complaints about any of these practices, we seem to find, when we wander elsewhere, that others manage things less well. Others do not seem to have American get-up-and-go. They are less inventive about finding solutions to problems major and minor. They are too mired in traditional or formal ways. And this holds the others back, while America forges ahead. We are very ready therefore to offer friendly advice to all and sundry—to Nigerians, to Japanese, to Italians—about how they could do things better. The emulation of American ways by others is considered a big plus when Americans assess what is going on in other countries. Daniel Boone plus the Peace Corps comprise the bases of an evaluation of comparative political economy.

But of course most Americans would deny that the less-ness of others is merely material. It is spiritual as well. Or if the term "spiritual" seems to exclude the secular humanists, it is cultural as well. Our presidents tell us, and our patriotic songs remind us, that we are the land of liberty. Others are less free than we are. The Statue of Liberty stretches out its hand to all those "huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Our density of freedom is visualized in so many ways. Which other country has the Bill of Rights? Where else is freedom of the press, of religion, of speech so honored? Where else are immigrants so integrated into the political system? Can one name another country in which someone arriving here as a teenager, and still speaking English to this day with a thick German accent, could become the secretary of state, the chief representative of Americans to the rest of the world? Is there any other country where social mobility, for those with merit, is so rapid? And which country can match us in the degree to which we are democratic? Democratic not merely in the continuing openness of our political structures, the centrality of a two-party system, but also in our quotidian mores? Is the United States not the country that excels in maintaining the principle of "first come, first served" in the practices of daily life, as opposed to a system in which those who have privilege get preference? And these democratic mores, in the public arena and in social life, date back at least two hundred, if not almost four hundred, years.

From melting pot to multiculturality, we have prided ourselves on the incredible ethnic mix of real American life—in our restaurants, in our universities, in our political leadership. Yes, we have had our faults, but we have done more than any other country to try to overcome them. Have we not taken the lead in the last decades in tearing down barriers of gender and race, in the constantly renewed search for the perfect meritocracy? Even our movements of protest give us cause for pride. Where else are they so persistent, so diverse, so legitimate?

And in the one arena where, up to 1945, we tended to admit that we were not the avant-garde of the world, the arena of high culture, has that not now all changed? Is New York not today the world center of art, of theater, of music performance, of dance, of opera? Our cinema is so superior that the French government must resort to protectionist measures to keep French audiences from seeing still more of it.

We can put this all together in a phrase that Americans have not used much, at least until September 11, but which we largely think in our hearts: We are more civilized than the rest of the world, the Old World, as we used to say with a token of disdain. We represent the highest aspirations of everyone, not merely Americans. We are the leader of the free world, because we are the freest country in the world, and others look to us for leadership, for holding high the banner of freedom, of civilization.

I mean none of this ironically. I am deeply persuaded that this image of the lessness of the rest of the world is profoundly ingrained in the American psyche, however many there may be who will be embarrassed by my presentation, and insist that they are not part of such a consensus, that they are (shall we say?) more cosmopolitan in their views. And it is in this sense, first of all, that the Twin Towers are a perfect metaphor. They signaled unlimited aspirations; they signaled technological achievement; they signaled a beacon to the world.

II. ATTACK ON AMERICA

> What the United States tastes today is a very small thing compared to what we have tasted for tens of years. Our nation has been tasting this humiliation and contempt for more than eighty years. . . . But if the sword falls on the United States, after eighty years, hypocrisy raises its ugly head lamenting the deaths of these killers who tampered with the blood, honor, and holy places of the Muslims. The least that one can describe these people is that they are morally depraved.
>
> —Osama bin Laden, October 7, 2001

Osama bin Laden does not think that America is beautiful. He thinks Americans are morally depraved. Now, of course, there are some Americans who also think that most Americans are morally depraved. We hear this theme from what might be called the cultural right in the United States. But whereas the critiques of the U.S. cultural right and those of Osama bin Laden overlap up to a point insofar as they deal with everyday mores, bin Laden's fundamental denunciation concerns what he calls U.S. hypocrisy in the world arena. And when it comes to America in the world arena, there are very few Americans who would agree with that characterization, and even those who might say something similar would want to nuance this view in ways that bin Laden would find irrelevant and unacceptable.

This was one of the two great shocks of September 11 for Americans. There were persons in the world who denied any good faith at all to American actions and motives in the world arena. How was it possible that persons who had less of everything worth having doubted that those who had more of everything had earned it by their merit? The moral effrontery of bin Laden amazed Americans and they found it galling.

To be sure, bin Laden was scarcely the first person to make this kind of verbal attack, but he is the first person who has been able to translate that verbal attack into a physical attack on U.S. soil, one that caught America by surprise and, momentarily at least, helpless. Until that happened, Americans could afford to ignore the verbal attacks so rampant in the world as the babblings of fools. But fools had now become villains. Furthermore, the villains had been initially successful, and this was the second great shock. We were supposed to be in a position to be able to ignore such criticisms because we were essentially invulnerable, and we have now discovered that we are not.

It has been frequently said that the world will never be the same again after September 11. I think this is silly hyperbole. But it is true that the American psyche may never be the same again. For once the unthinkable happens, it becomes thinkable. And a direct assault on mainland America by a scattered band of individuals had always been unthinkable. Now we have had to establish an Office of Homeland Security. Now we have the Pentagon discussing whether they should establish what they call an area command, a military structure hitherto limited to the areas outside the U.S. covering all the rest of the world, that would cover the United States itself.

Above all we now have "terrorists" in our vocabulary. In the 1950s, the term "Communists" received expansive employ. It covered not only persons who were members of Communist parties, not only those who thought of themselves or were thought of by others as "fellow travelers," but even those who lacked sufficient "enthusiasm" for the development of a hydrogen bomb. This was after all the specific charge that led the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission in 1953 to suspend the security clearance of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the very person who was known as, and had hitherto been honored as, the "father of the atomic bomb."

The term "terrorism" has now obtained the same expansive meaning. In November 2001 I watched the television program *Law and Order*. The plot for this particular episode revolved around the burning down of a building in the process of construction. The background to this was that the contractor had received the land from the city, land that had previously been a neighborhood garden, tended by the community. There was opposition to this construction in the community. A group of young persons identified as "environmental activists" decided to burn down the building in protest. The complication was that unbeknownst to them, by accident, someone was in the building and died in the fire. In the end, the arsonists are caught and convicted. The interesting point of this banal story is that throughout the program, the arsonists are repeatedly referred to as "terrorists." By any definition of terrorist, it is a stretch to use the term in this case. But no matter! It was so used, and it will continue to be so used.

We are the land of liberty, but today we hear voices—in the government, in the press, in the population at large—saying that we have accorded too much liberty, especially to noncitizens, and that "terrorists" have taken advantage of our liberty. Therefore it is said the privileges of liberty must give way to procedures that meet our requirements for security. For example, we apparently worry that if we catch "terrorists" and put them on trial, they may then have a public forum, they may not be convicted, or if convicted they may not receive the death penalty. So in order to ensure that none of these things happen, we are creating military courts to be convened by the president, with rules to be established by him alone. Originally the accused were to have no right of appeal to anyone, and the courts were to be operated in total secrecy. The courts will still be able to proceed rapidly to a conclusion—presumably to a death penalty. The degree to which normal defense rights will be ensured is still open. And in our land of liberty this is being widely applauded.

We consider, we have stated publicly, that the attack on America is an attack on our values and on civilization itself. We find such an attack unconscionable. We are determined to win the worldwide war against terrorism—against terrorists *and all those who give them shelter and support*. We are determined to show that, despite this attack, we are and remain the greatest country in the world. In order to prove this, we are not being adjured by our president to make individual sacrifices, not even the small sacrifice of paying more taxes, but rather to carry on our lives as normal. We are, however, expected to applaud without reservation whatever our government and our armed forces will do, even if this is not normal.

The extent of this requirement of "no reservations" may be seen in the widespread denunciation of those who try to "explain" why the events of September 11 occurred. Explanation is considered justification and virtual endorsement of terror. The American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), an organization whose founders are Lynne Cheney and Sen. Joseph Lieberman, issued a pamphlet in November 2001 entitled "Defending Civilization: How Our Universities Are Failing America and What Can Be Done About It."[2] It is a short pamphlet that makes its points with remarkable pithiness. It says that "college and university faculty are the weak link in America's response to the attack." It continues with this analysis: "Rarely did professors publicly mention heroism, rarely did they discuss the differences between good and evil, the nature of Western political order or the virtue of a free society. Their public messages were short on patriotism and long on self-flagellation. Indeed, the message of much of academe was: BLAME AMERICA FIRST!"

The pamphlet devotes most of its space to an appendix of 117 quotations that the authors feel illustrate their point. These quotations include statements not merely of such persons as Noam Chomsky and Jesse Jackson but of less usual targets of such denunciations—the dean of the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, a former deputy secretary of state. In short, the authors of the pamphlet were aiming wide.

It is clear at this point that even if the events of September 11 will not alter the basic geopolitical realities of the contemporary world, they may have a lasting impact on American political structures. How much of an impact remains to be seen. It does seem, however, that the puzzlement of Americans of which I spoke—why did this happen? and how could it happen?—is a puzzle to which we are not being encouraged to respond at least not yet.

The Twin Towers are also a metaphor for the attack on America. They were built with great engineering skill. They were supposed to be impervious to every conceivable kind of accidental or deliberate destruction. Yet, apparently, no one had ever considered that two planes filled with jet fuel might deliberately crash into the towers, and hit the buildings at precisely the point, 20 percent down from the top, that would maximize destruction. Nor had anyone anticipated that the buildings could collapse slowly, overwhelmingly, and in everyone's view, bringing down other buildings in their wake. No one ever expected that the

fires such a collapse ignited would continue to burn for months afterward. The United States may be able to avenge the attack, but it cannot undo it. Technology turns out to be less than perfect as a protective shield.

III. AMERICA AND WORLD POWER

> Anti-Catholicism, as it evolved [in Great Britain in the eighteenth century], usually served a dialectical function, drawing attention to the supposed despotism, superstition, military oppressiveness and material poverty of Catholic regimes so as to throw into greater relief supposed Anglo-British freedoms, naval supremacy, and agrarian and commercial prosperity, and consequently superior mode of empire.
>
> —Linda Colley, "Multiple Kingdoms"

I start with this quote from Linda Colley[3] to remind us that the United States is not the first hegemonic power in the history of the modern world-system, but rather the third, and that hegemony has its cultural rules as well as its vulnerabilities. One of the cultural rules is that the denigration of others is indispensable to sustaining the internal self-assurance that makes possible the effective exercise of world-power.

There is nothing so blinding as success. And the United States has had its fair share of success in the past two hundred years. Success has the vicious consequence that it seems to breed almost inevitably the conviction that it will necessarily continue. Success is a poor guide to wise policy. Failure at least often leads to reflection; success seldom does.

Fifty years ago, U.S. hegemony in the world-system was based on a combination of productive efficiency that outstripped by far that of any rivals, a world-political agenda that was warmly endorsed by its allies in Europe and Asia, and military superiority. Today, the productive efficiency of U.S. enterprises faces very extensive competition, principally from the enterprises of its closest allies. As a result, the world-political agenda of the United States is no longer so warmly endorsed and is often clearly contested, even by its allies, especially given the disappearance of the Soviet Union. What remains for the moment is military superiority.

It is worth thinking about the objectives of U.S. foreign policy, as pursued for the last fifty years by successive U.S. governments. Obviously, the United States has been concerned with threats posed by governments it considered hostile or at least inimical to U.S. interests. There is nothing wrong or exceptional about this. This is true of the foreign policy of any state in the modern world-system, especially any powerful state. The question is how the United States has thought it could deal with such threats.

In the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. seemed to be so strong that it could arrange, without too much difficulty and with a minimal use of force, that governments it did not like either could be neutralized (we called that containment) or, in the case of weaker governments, could be overthrown by internal forces supported covertly by the U.S. government, assisted occasionally by a little old-fashioned gunship diplomacy.

Neutralization was the tactic employed vis-à-vis the Communist world. The United States did not seek to overthrow the Soviet Union or any of its satellite regimes in eastern and central Europe. Basically, it did not seek this because it was not in a military position to carry this out against the expected resistance by the government of the U.S.S.R. Instead, the U.S. government entered into a tacit accord with the U.S.S.R.—the Yalta agreement that it would not even try to do this, in return for a pledge by the Soviet Union that it would not try to expand its zone. The accord was not, however, intended to apply to East Asia where Soviet troops were absent, thanks primarily to the insistence of the Communist regimes in China and North Korea. So the U.S. did in fact try to overthrow these regimes, as well as that in

Vietnam, but it did not, however, succeed. And these failed attempts left a serious scar on American public opinion.

The United States, was however, able to enforce its will in the rest of the world, and did so without compunction. Think of Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, Lebanon in 1956, the Dominican Republic in 1965, and Chile in 1973. The coup in Chile by General Pinochet against the freely elected government of Salvador Allende, with the active support of the U.S. government, occurred on September 11. I do not know whether or not Osama bin Laden or his followers were aware of this coincidence of dates but it is nonetheless a symbolic coincidence that many, especially in Latin America, will notice. It also points to a further metaphor of the Twin Towers. The Twin Towers were a marvelous technological achievement. But technological achievements can and will be copied. The Malaysians have already copied the Twin Towers architecturally, and a bigger skyscraper is being built right now in Shanghai. Symbols too can be copied. Now we have two September 11 anniversaries on which victims mourn.

In the 1970s, U.S. foreign policy methods changed, had to change. Chile was the last major instance in which the United States was able so cavalierly to arrange other governments to its preferences. (I do not count the cases of either Grenada or Panama, which were very small countries with no serious mode of military defense.) What had caused this change was the end of U.S. economic dominance of the world-economy, combined with the military defeat of the United States in Vietnam. Geopolitical reality had changed. The U.S. government could no longer concentrate on maintaining, even less on expanding, its power; instead its prime goal became preventing a too-rapid erosion of its power—both in the world-economy and in the military arena.

In the world-economy, the United States faced not only the hot breath of its competitors in western Europe and Japan but the seeming success of "developmentalist" policies in large parts of the rest of the world, policies that had been designed expressly to constrain the ability of countries in the core zone to accumulate capital at what was seen to be the expense of countries in the periphery. We should remember that the 1970s was declared by the United Nations the "decade of development." In the 1970s there was much talk of creating a "new international economic order," and in UNESCO of creating a "new international information order." The 1970s was the time of the two famous OPEC oil-price rises, which sent waves of panic into the American public.

The U.S. position on all these thrusts was either ambiguous discomfort or outright opposition. Globally, a counterthrust was launched. It involved the aggressive assertion of neoliberalism and the so-called Washington Consensus, the transformation of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) into the World Trade Organization, the Davos meetings, and the spreading of the concept of globalization with its corollary, TINA (there is no alternative). Essentially, all these efforts combined amounted to a dismantlement of the "developmentalist" policies throughout the world, and particularly in the peripheral zones of the world-economy. In the short run, that is, in the 1980s and 1990s, this counteroffensive led by the U.S. government seemed to succeed.

These policies on the front of the world-economy were matched by a persistent world-military policy that might be summarized as the "antiproliferation" policy. When the United States successfully made the first atomic bombs in 1945, it was determined to maintain a monopoly on such very powerful weapons. It was willing to share this monopoly with its faithful junior partner, Great Britain, but that was it. Of course, as we know, the other "great powers" simply ignored this claim. First the Soviet Union, then France, then China achieved nuclear capacity. So then did India and later Pakistan. So did South Africa, whose apartheid government however admitted this only as it was leaving power and was careful to dismantle

this capacity before it turned over power to the successor, more democratic, government of the Black African majority. And so did Israel, although it has always denied this publicly. Then there are the "almost" nuclear powers, if indeed they are still in the "almost" category—North Korea, Iran, Iraq (whose facilities Israel bombed in the 1980s in order to keep it in the "almost" category), Libya, and maybe Argentina. And there are in addition the former Soviet countries that inherited nuclear capacity—Ukraine, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan. To this must be added the other lethal technologies, biological and chemical warfare. These are so much easier to create, store, and employ that we are not sure how many countries have some capacity, even a considerable capacity, in these fields.

The United States has had a simple straightforward policy. By hook or by crook, by force or by bribery, it wishes to deny everybody else access to these weapons. It has obviously not been successful, but its efforts over the past years have at least slowed down the process of proliferation. There is a further catch in U.S. policy. Insofar as it tries to employ international agreements to limit proliferation, it simultaneously tries not to be bound by such constraints itself, or to be minimally bound. The U.S. government has made it clear that it will renounce any such restraints whenever it deems it necessary to do so, while loudly condemning any other government that seeks to do the same.

As a policy, nonproliferation seems doomed to failure, not only in the long run but even in the middle run. The best that the United States will be able to do in the next twenty-five years is to slow the process down somewhat. But there is also a moral and political question here. The United States trusts itself, but trusts no one else. The U.S. government wishes to inspect North Korean locations to see if it is violating these norms. It has not offered the United Nations or anyone else the right to inspect U.S. locations. The United States trusts itself to use such weapons wisely and in the defense of liberty (a concept seemingly identical with U.S. national interests). It assumes that anyone else might intend to use such weapons against liberty (a concept seemingly identical here, too, with U.S. national interests).

Personally, I do not trust any government to use such weapons wisely. I would be happy to see them all banned, but I do not believe this is truly enforceable in the contemporary interstate system. So personally I abstain from moralizing on this issue. Moralizing opens one to the charge of hypocrisy. And where a cynical neorealist (a category that probably includes me) would say that all governments are hypocritical, moralizing jars badly if one wishes to attract support in other countries on the basis of one's comparative virtue.

IV. AMERICA: IDEALS VERSUS PRIVILEGE

> To suggest that the universal civilization is in place already is to be willfully blind to the present reality and, even worse, to trivialize the goal and hinder the materialization of a genuine universality in the future.
>
> —Chinua Achebe[4]

> The opposition between globalization and local traditions is false: globalization directly resuscitates local traditions, it literally thrives on them, which is why the opposite of globalization is not local traditions, but *universality*.
>
> —Slavoj Zizek[5]

The story of U.S. and world power can be resumed quite simply at this moment. I do not believe that America and Americans are the cause of all the world's miseries and injustices. I

do believe they are their prime beneficiaries. And this is the fundamental problem of the United States as a nation located in a world of nations.

Americans, especially American politicians and publicists, like to speak about our ideals. An advertisement for the "best-selling" book of the television host Chris Matthews, *Now, Let Me Tell You What I Really Think,* offers this excerpt: "When you think about it, we Americans are different. That word 'freedom' isn't just in our documents; it's in our cowboy souls."[6] "Cowboy souls"—I could not have said it better. Our ideals are perhaps special. But the same people who remind us of that do not like to talk about our privileges, which are also perhaps special. Indeed, they denounce those who do talk of them. But the ideals and the privileges go together. They may seem to be in conflict, but they presuppose each other.

I am not someone who denigrates American ideals. I find them quite wonderful, even refreshing. I cherish them, I invoke them, I further them. Take, for example, the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution—something correctly remembered at all the appropriate ceremonies as incarnating American ideals. Let us, however, recall two things about the First Amendment. It wasn't in the original Constitution, which means it wasn't considered a founding principle. And public opinion polls have often shown that a majority of the American public would change, diminish, or even eliminate these guarantees, in whole or in part, even in so-called ordinary times. When we are in a "war" such as the "war on terrorism," then neither the U.S. government nor the U.S. public can be counted on to defend these ideals, and not even the Supreme Court can be relied upon to hold fast to them in an "emergency." Such defense is left largely to an often timid organization with at best minority support in public opinion, the American Civil Liberties Union, membership in which by a candidate in a general election is often cited as a reason not to vote for that candidate. So, I am in favor of freedom of speech and freedom of religion and all the other freedoms, but sometimes I must wonder if America is.

The reason is not that a Voltairean streak is lacking in the American public, but that sometimes we fear that our privileges are in danger of being eroded or disappearing. In such cases, most people place privilege ahead of ideals. Once again, Americans are not unusual in this regard. They simply are more powerful and have more privileges. Americans are freer to have the ideals because they are freer to ignore them. They have the power to override their cowboy souls.

The question before Americans is really the following: If American hegemony is in slow decline, and I believe it unquestionably is, will we lose the ideals because we will have less power to override them? Will our cowboy souls erect barbed wire around our national ranch in order to guard our privileges in danger of decline, as though they could not escape through the barbed wire? Let me suggest here another metaphor that comes from the Twin Towers. Towers that are destroyed can be rebuilt. But will we rebuild them in the same way—with the same assurance that we are reaching for the stars and doing it right, with the same certainty that they will be seen as a beacon to the world? Or will we rebuild in other ways, after careful reflection about what we really need and what is really possible for us, and really desirable for us?

And who is "us"? If one follows the statements of Attorney-General John Ashcroft, seconded by many others in the U.S. government, in the press, and among the public in general, the "us" is no longer everyone in the United States, not even everyone legally resident in the U.S., but only U.S. citizens. And we may wonder whether "us" may not be further narrowed in the near future. As Slavoj Zizek points out, globalization is not the opposite of localism, it thrives on localism, especially the localism of the powerful. The "us" is by no stretch of the imagination *Homo sapiens sapiens*. Is *Homo* then so *sapiens?*

V. AMERICA: FROM CERTAINTY TO UNCERTAINTY

> Darwin's revolution should be epitomized as the substitution of variation for essence as the central category of natural reality. . . . What can be more discombobulating than a full inversion, or "grand flip," in our concept of reality: in Plato's world, variation is accidental, while essences record a higher reality; in Darwin's reversal, we value variation as a defining (and concrete earthly) reality, while averages (our closest operational approach to "essences") become mental abstractions.
>
> —Stephen J. Gould[7]

> Nature is indeed related to the creation of unpredictable novelty, where the possible is richer than the real.
>
> —Ilya Prigogine[8]

President Bush has been offering the American people certainty about their future. This is the one thing totally beyond his power to offer. The future of the United States, the future of the world, in the short run but even more in the medium run, is absolutely uncertain. Certainty may seem desirable if one reflects on one's privileges. It seems less desirable if one thinks that the privileges are doomed to decline, even disappear. And if it were certain that the Osama bin Ladens of this world in all camps were to prevail, who would cherish that certainty?

I return to the question I raised before as one of the puzzles that Americans are feeling right now: What must be done, what can be done, that an event like that of September 11 will not, could not happen again? The answer we are being offered is that the exercise of overwhelming force by the U.S. government, military force primarily, will guarantee this. Our leaders are prudent enough to remind us that this will take some time, but they do not hesitate to make medium-run assurances. For the moment, it seems that the American people are willing to test this hypothesis. If the U.S. government received criticism right after September 11, it came mostly from those who believe its expression of military power was far too timid. There are important groups who were pressing the U.S. government to go much further—to operate militarily against Iraq, and some would add Iran, Syria, Sudan, Palestine, North Korea. Why not Cuba next? There are some who are even saying that reluctant generals should be retired to make way for younger, more vigorous warriors. There are those who believe that it is their role to precipitate Armageddon.

There are two arguments one can make against this. One is that the United States could not win such a worldwide military conflagration. A second is that the United States would not wish to bear the moral consequences, first of all for itself, of trying to do so. Fortunately, one does not have to choose between realism and idealism. It is not belittling of our moral values that they are seconded by elementary common sense.

After the Civil War, the United States spent some eighty years pursuing its manifest destiny. It was not sure, all that time, whether it wished to be an isolationist or an imperial power. And when, in 1945, it had finally achieved hegemony in the world-system, when it had (in Shakespeare's choice) not only achieved greatness but had greatness thrust upon it, the American people were not fully prepared for the role they now had to play. We spent thirty years learning how to "assume our responsibilities" in the world. And just when we had learned this reasonably well, our hegemony passed its peak.

We have spent the last thirty years insisting very loudly that we are still hegemonic and that everyone needs to continue to acknowledge it. If one is truly hegemonic, one does not need to make such a request. We have wasted the past thirty years. What the United States needs to do now is to learn how to live with the new reality—that it no longer has the power

to decide unilaterally what is good for everyone. It may not even be in a position to decide unilaterally what is good for itself. It has to come to terms with the world. It is not Osama bin Laden with whom we must conduct a dialogue. We must start with our near friends and allies—with Canada and Mexico, with Europe, with Japan. And once we have trained ourselves to hear them and to believe that they too have ideals and interests, that they too have ideas and hopes and aspirations, then and perhaps only then shall we be ready to dialogue with the rest of the world, that is, with the majority of the world.

This dialogue, once we begin to enter into it, will not be easy, and may not even be pleasant. For they shall ask us to renounce some privileges. They will ask us to fulfill our ideals. They will ask us to learn. Fifty years ago, the great African poet and politician Léopold-Sédar Senghor called on the world to come to the "rendez-vous du donner et du recevoir." Americans know what they have to give in such a rendezvous. But are they aware of something they wish to receive?

We are being called upon these days to return to spiritual values, as though we had ever observed these values. But what are these values? Let me remind you. In the Christian tradition (Matthew 19:24), it is said: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." And in the Jewish tradition, Hillel tells us: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." And in the Muslim tradition, the Koran (52.36) tells us: "Or did they create the heavens and the earth? Nay! They have no certainty." Are these our values?

There is no single American tradition nor single American set of values. There are, and always have been, many Americas. We each of us remember and appeal to the Americas we prefer. The America of slavery and racism is a deep American tradition, and is still very much with us. The America of frontier individualism and gunslinging desperados is an American tradition, and is still very much with us. The America of robber barons and their philanthropic children is an American tradition, and is still very much with us. And the America of the Wobblies and the Haymarket riots, an event celebrated throughout the world except in America, is an American tradition, and is still very much with us.

Sojourner Truth, telling the National Women's Congress in 1851, "Ain't I a woman?" is an American tradition. But so were those late-nineteenth-century suffragists who argued for the vote for women on the ground that it would counterbalance the votes of Blacks and immigrants. The America that welcomes immigrants and the America that rejects them are both American traditions. The America that unites in patriotic resolve and the America that resists militarist engagements are both American traditions. The America of equality and of inequality are both American traditions. There is no essence there. There is no there there. As Gould reminds us, it is variation, not essence, that is the core of reality. And the question is whether the variation amongst us will diminish, increase, or remain the same. It seems to me exceptionally high at the moment.

Osama bin Laden will soon be forgotten, but the kind of political violence we call terrorism will remain very much with us in the thirty to fifty years to come. Terrorism is to be sure a very ineffective way to change the world. It is counterproductive and leads to counterforce, which can often wipe out the immediate set of actors. But it will nonetheless continue to occur. An America that continues to relate to the world by a unilateral assertion that it represents civilization, whether it does so in the form of isolationist withdrawal or of active interventionism, cannot live in peace with the world, and therefore will not live in peace with itself. What we do to the world, we do to ourselves. Can the land of liberty and privilege, even in amidst its decline, learn to be a land that treats everyone everywhere as equals?

And can we deal as equal to equal in the world-system if we do not deal as equal to equal within our own frontiers?

What shall we choose to do now? I can have my preferences but I cannot, you cannot, predict what we shall do. Indeed, it is our good fortune that we cannot be certain of any of these projected futures. That reserves for us moral choice. That reserves for us the possible that is richer than the real. That reserves for us unpredictable novelty. We have entered a terrible era, an era of conflicts and evils we find it difficult to imagine but, sadly, one to which we can rapidly become accustomed. It is easy to allow our sensitivities to be hardened in the struggle to survive. It is far harder to save our cowboy souls. But at the end of the process lies the possibility, which is far from a certainty, of a more substantively rational world, of a more egalitarian world, of a more democratic world—of a universality that results from giving and receiving, a universality that is the opposite of globalization.

The last metaphor that is attached to the Twin Towers is that these structures were, are, and will be a choice. We chose to build them. We are deciding whether or not to rebuild them. The factors that enter into these choices were and are and will be very, very many. We are rebuilding America. The world is rebuilding the world. The factors that enter into these choices are and will be very, very many. Can we maintain our moral bearing amidst the uncertainty that the world we have made heretofore is only one of thousands of alternative worlds we might have created, and the world that we shall be making in the thirty to fifty years to come may or may not be better, may or may not reduce the contradiction between our ideals and our privileges?

In-sha 'allah.

Notes

1. *Theory and Society.* 21, no. 1 (February, 1992): 1–28.
2. The authors are Jerry L. Martin and Anne Neal.
3. "Multiple Kingdoms," *London Review of Books.* (July 19, 2001): 23.
4. Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (N.Y.: Anchor Books, 2000), 91.
5. Slavoj Zizek, *On Belief* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2011), 152.
6. *New York Times.* (November 28, 2001): E8.
7. *Full House: The Spread of Excellence from Plato to Darwin* (N.Y.: Three Rivers Press, 1996), 41.
8. Ilya Prigogine, *The End of Certainty: Time, Chaos, and the New Laws of Nature* (N.Y.: Free Press, 1997), 72.

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Section VI

War, Genocide, and Repression

War, genocide, and repression are three forms of violence carried out by agents of the state such as armies and the police or by irregular forces such as militias and vigilantes that the state organizes, supports, tolerates, or is unable to suppress. The most direct victims are targeted civilian populations, members of the armed forces, and in ways large and small the social fabric of society. Highly militarized societies claim large percentages of the wealth created through people's labor either in the form of high taxes or neglect of social services. There may also be widespread censorship of information, the absences of fully open discussion and debate in education and the media, the erosion of personal liberties, indifference to the human pain and suffering of officially defined enemies, and skewed conceptions of gender roles, particularly in prevailing definitions of manhood. (Herman and Chomsky 2002; Loewen 1995).

In "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," Charles Tilly examines the role of war in European nation-state formation. His argument is that the process is best understood when seen as a protection racket. Beginning in the West with a string of small, inchoate territories and fiefdoms hundreds of years ago, fledgling nation-states moved slowly in the direction of large united territories with state institutions, officials, and functions. The force behind this was war. Agents of developing states carried out four types of activities: (1) war making to eliminate or neutralize rivals outside of the territories they already controlled, (2) state making to eliminate or neutralize rivals inside these territories, (3) protection to eliminate or neutralize enemies of their clients, and (4) extraction to gain the resources needed to carry out the first three activities. The result was the consolidation of territories and the evolution of state institutions and an officialdom that we associate with the modern nation-state system.

There is a striking resemblance between Tilly's analysis of war as racketeering during the early modern period and contemporary U.S. foreign and military policy. After the Second World War the U.S. organized a permanent war economy with large scale military mobilization during peacetime and wartime alike. Since the late 1940s the U.S. has been at war as often as it has been at peace, and it has been unremittingly at war since the start of the 1990s. Instilling fear of enemies such as communism, and more recently terrorism, and then offering protection from them has been basic to this policy and is consistent with Tilly's analysis.

Tilly implies that state power includes the power to frame, control, and direct public discourse about war by demonizing enemies, controlling the flow of information, and denying critics access to the public. This recalls Gramsci's earlier discussion of the state as an "educator," and the media section where it is argued that the media often serve as a pipeline for the delivery of official viewpoints. As such, these readings provide a clear illustration of how coercive, ideological, and economic power are interrelated.

Genocide is a particularly heinous form of mass killing because of the very large numbers of people who are killed and because the victims are not killed for anything they have done. People are targeted for who they are. It is their race, tribe, ethnicity, language, religion or other immutable demographic trait that condemns them. Genocides have gone on throughout recorded history, but there was never a name for them until Polish jurist, Raphael Lemkin, by then an American citizen, invented the word genocide in his 1944 book Axis Power in Occupied Europe. Furthermore, genocide was never a crime until the United Nations passed the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide in 1948. Yet the U.N. is an organization of nation states. As a result of that the U.N. has consistently acted in the national interest of its members, and not surprisingly, therefore, has been ineffective in preventing genocide or punishing it. In "Getting Away with Murder (Almost): A Genocide Primer" Levon Chorbajian examines this history in some detail with a focus on the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust as well as more recent events in Cambodia and Rwanda.

Repression is best considered an aspect of the broader issue of social control that faces rulers in societies based on the exploitation of the many by the few. Societies' rulers are always radically outnumbered by everybody else, and this presents the problem of how to get the many to agree to the rules established by the few. The many 'solutions' to this problem fall into one of two broad categories. The first is force. This includes unrestricted police and military force, elimination of civil and personal liberties, torture, political assassination, and murder to create a climate of terror. These techniques can be effective, even for long periods of time, in controlling the actions of all but a very small number willing to be martyred.

The problem posed by a heavy reliance on force as a mechanism of control is that the nature of the political system is obvious to all who are familiar with it. A far more effective system of control is one in which power is not obvious to society's members. Why then do governments such as the United States employ force as a means of social control? One answer to this complex question is racism. Some communities of people simply do not have the same level of protection as others. African-Americans and other minorities are prime examples. We also need to consider that indirect mechanisms of control are not always effective. Some people, especially poor people, minorities, the unemployed, the homeless, and chronic debtors, among others may receive so few rewards from the system that their loyalty to it runs from weak to non-existent. In other cases, people may be forced to organize and resist on issues of great concern to them. Unionized workers may be thrust into direct conflict with employers, police and national guard forces, and hired goons. Another possibility is that people will protest corporate and government initiated environmental degradation, racism, gender oppression, and war.

One place that repression manifests itself is in the daily workings of the criminal justice system. In 1996 juvenile sentencing reformer Jerome G. Miller published Search and Destroy: African-American Males in the Criminal Justice System. In his book Miller warned that the war on drugs was having a major disproportionate effect on young African-American males who were being targeted, arrested, and prosecuted by the police and often sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The result of these practices was an explosion in the U.S. prison population from roughly 500,000 in 1980 to over 2.2 million today. Among whites, African-Americans, and Hispanics, the largest percentage of prisoners is African-American. In "The New Jim Crow" Michelle Alexander argues that with the end of Jim Crow race could no longer be used as the explicit reason for the disenfranchisement of African-Americans. Therefore, the strategy for electing conservative politicians was switched to the seemingly race neutral disenfranchisement of former convicts, a process greatly aided and abetted by the War on Drugs. As Alexander puts it, "We have not ended racial caste in American; we

have merely redesigned it." She clearly explains how the War on Drugs works as a racial filter to bar as many African-Americans—the nation's most liberal voting bloc--from the polls as possible.

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Chapter 28

War Making and State Making as Organized Crime

Charles Tilly

If protection rackets represent organized crime at its smoothest, then war making and state making—quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy—qualify as our largest examples of organized crime. Without branding all generals and statesmen as murderers or thieves, I want to urge the value of that analogy. At least for the European experience of the past few centuries, a portrait of war makers and state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs bears a far greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives: the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government.

The reflections that follow merely illustrate the analogy of war making and state making with organized crime from a few hundred years of European experience and offer tentative arguments concerning principles of change and variation underlying the experience. My reflections grow from contemporary concerns: worries about the increasing destructiveness of war, the expanding role of great powers as suppliers of arms and military organization to poor countries, and the growing importance of military rule in those same countries. They spring from the hope that the European experience, properly understood, will help us to grasp what is happening today, perhaps even to do something about it.

. . . It will show us that coercive exploitation played a large part in the creation of the European states. It will show us that popular resistance to coercive exploitation forced would-be power holders to concede protection and constraints on their own action. It will therefore help us to eliminate faulty implicit comparisons between today's Third World and yesterday's Europe. That clarification will make it easier to understand exactly how today's world is different and what we therefore have to explain. It may even help us to explain the current looming presence of military organization and action throughout the world. Although that result would delight me, I do not promise anything so grand.

This essay, then, concerns the place of organized means of violence in the growth and change of those peculiar forms of government we call national states: relatively centralized, differentiated organizations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory. . . .

. . . The . . . argument stresses the interdependence of war making and state making and the analogy between both of those processes and what, when less successful and smaller in scale, we call organized crime. War makes states, I shall claim. Banditry, piracy, gangland rivalry, policing, and war making all belong on the same continuum—that I shall claim as

well. For the historically limited period in which national states were becoming the dominant organizations in Western countries, I shall also claim that mercantile capitalism and state making reinforced each other.

Double-Edged Protection

In contemporary American parlance, the word "protection" sounds two contrasting tones. One is comforting, the other ominous. With one tone, "protection" calls up images of the shelter against danger provided by a powerful friend, a large insurance policy, or a sturdy roof. With the other, it evokes the racket in which a local strong man forces merchants to pay tribute in order to avoid damage—damage the strong man himself threatens to deliver. The difference, to be sure, is a matter of degree: A hell-and-damnation priest is likely to collect contributions from his parishioners only to the extent that they believe his predictions of brimstone for infidels; our neighborhood mobster may actually be, as he claims to be, a brothel's best guarantee of operation free of police interference.

Which image the word "protection" brings to mind depends mainly on our assessment of the reality and externality of the threat. Someone who produces both the danger and, at a price, the shield against it is a racketeer. Someone who provides a needed shield but has little control over the danger's appearance qualifies as a legitimate protector, especially if his price is no higher than his competitors'. Someone who supplies reliable, low-priced shielding both from local racketeers and from outside marauders makes the best offer of all.

Apologists for particular governments and for government in general commonly argue, precisely, that they offer protection from local and external violence. They claim that the prices they charge barely cover the costs of protection. They call people who complain about the price of protection "anarchists," "subversives," or both at once. But consider the definition of a racketeer as someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction. Governments' provision of protection, by this standard, often qualifies as racketeering. To the extent that the threats against which a given government protects its citizens are imaginary or are consequences of its own activities, the government has organized a protection racket. Since governments themselves commonly simulate, stimulate, or even fabricate threats of external war and since the repressive and extractive activities of governments often constitute the latest current threats to the livelihoods of their own citizens, many governments operate in essentially the same ways as racketeers. There is, of course, a difference: Racketeers, by the conventional definition, operate without the sanctity of governments.

How do racketeer governments themselves acquire authority? As a question of fact and of ethics, that is one of the oldest conundrums of political analysis. Back to Machiavelli and Hobbes, nevertheless, political observers have recognized that, whatever else they do, governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize violence. It matters little whether we take violence in a narrow sense, such as damage to persons and objects, or in a broad sense, such as violation of people's desires and interests; by either criterion, governments stand out from other organizations by their tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of violence. The distinction between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" force, furthermore, makes no difference to the fact. If we take legitimacy to depend on conformity to an abstract principle or on the assent of the governed (or both at once), these conditions may serve to justify, perhaps even to explain, the tendency to monopolize force; they do not contradict the fact.

In any case, Arthur Stinchcombe's agreeably cynical treatment of legitimacy serves the purposes of political analysis much more efficiently. Legitimacy, according to Stinchcombe, depends rather little on abstract principle or assent of the governed: "The person *over whom power is exercised* is not usually as important as *other power-holders*."[1] Legitimacy is the

probability that other authorities will act to confirm the decisions of a given authority. Other authorities, I would add, are much more likely to confirm the decisions of a challenged authority that controls substantial force; not only fear of retaliation, but also desire to maintain a stable environment recommend that general rule. The rule underscores the importance of the authority's monopoly of force. A tendency to monopolize the means of violence makes a government's claim to provide protection, in either the comforting or the ominous sense of the word, more credible and more difficult to resist.

Frank recognition of the central place of force in governmental activity does not require us to believe that governmental authority rests "only" or "ultimately" on the threat of violence. Nor does it entail the assumption that a government's only service is protection. Even when a government's use of force imposes a large cost, some people may well decide that the government's other services outbalance the costs of acceding to its monopoly of violence. Recognition of the centrality of force opens the way to an understanding of the growth and change of governmental forms.

Here is a preview of the most general argument: Power holders' pursuit of war involved them willy-nilly in the extraction of resources for war making from the populations over which they had control and in the promotion of capital accumulation by those who could help them borrow and buy. War making, extraction, and capital accumulation interacted to shape European state making. Power holders did not undertake those three momentous activities with the intention of creating national states—centralized, differentiated, autonomous, extensive political organizations. Nor did they ordinarily foresee that national states would emerge from war making, extraction, and capital accumulation.

Instead, the people who controlled European states and states in the making warred in order to check or overcome their competitors and thus to enjoy the advantages of power within a secure or expanding territory. To make more effective war, they attempted to locate more capital. In the short run, they might acquire that capital by conquest, by selling off their assets, or by coercing or dispossessing accumulators of capital. In the long run, the quest inevitably involved them in establishing regular access to capitalists who could supply and arrange credit and in imposing one form of regular taxation or another on the people and activities within their spheres of control.

As the process continued, state makers developed a durable interest in promoting the accumulation of capital, sometimes in the guise of direct return to their own enterprises. Variations in the difficulty of collecting taxes, in the expense of the particular kind of armed force adopted, in the amount of war making required to hold off competitors, and so on resulted in the principal variations in the forms of European states. It all began with the effort to monopolize the means of violence within a delimited territory adjacent to a power holder's base.

Violence and Government

What distinguished the violence produced by states from the violence delivered by anyone else? In the long run, enough to make the division between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" force credible. Eventually, the personnel of states purveyed violence on a larger scale, more effectively, more efficiently, with wider assent from their subject populations, and with readier collaboration from neighboring authorities than did the personnel of other organizations. But it took a long time for that series of distinctions to become established. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, the practice of using it routinely to accomplish their ends, or both at once. The continuum ran from bandits and pirates to kings via tax collectors, regional power holders, and professional soldiers.

The uncertain, elastic line between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" violence appeared in the upper reaches of power. Early in the state-making process, many parties shared the right to use violence, its actual employment, or both at once. The long love–hate affair between aspiring state makers and pirates or bandits illustrates the division. "Behind piracy on the seas acted cities and city-states," writes Fernand Braudel of the sixteenth century. "Behind banditry, that terrestrial piracy, appeared the continual aid of lords."[2] In times of war, indeed, the managers of full-fledged states often commissioned privateers, hired sometime bandits to raid their enemies, and encouraged their regular troops to take booty. In royal service, soldiers and sailors were often expected to provide for themselves by preying on the civilian population: commandeering, raping, looting, taking prizes. When demobilized, they commonly continued the same practices, but without the same royal protection; demobilized ships became pirate vessels, demobilized troops bandits.

It also worked the other way: A king's best source of armed supporters was sometimes the world of outlaws. Robin Hood's conversion to royal archer may be a myth, but the myth records a practice. The distinctions between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" users of violence came clear only very slowly, in the process during which the state's armed forces became relatively unified and permanent.

Up to that point, as Braudel says, maritime cities and terrestrial lords commonly offered protection, or even sponsorship, to freebooters. Many lords who did not pretend to be kings, furthermore, successfully claimed the right to levy troops and maintain their own armed retainers. Without calling on some of those lords to bring their armies with them, no king could fight a war; yet the same armed lords constituted the king's rivals and opponents, his enemies' potential allies. For that reason, before the seventeenth century, regencies for child sovereigns reliably produced civil wars. For the same reason, disarming the great stood high on the agenda of every would-be state maker.

* * * *

By the later eighteenth century, through most of Europe, monarchs controlled permanent, professional military forces that rivaled those of their neighbors and far exceeded any other organized armed force within their own territories. The state's monopoly of large-scale violence was turning from theory to reality.

The elimination of local rivals, however, posed a serious problem. Beyond the scale of a small city-state, no monarch could govern a population with his armed force alone, nor could any monarch afford to create a professional staff large and strong enough to reach from him to the ordinary citizen. Before quite recently, no European government approached the completeness of articulation from top to bottom achieved by imperial China. Even the Roman Empire did not come close. In one way or another, every European government before the French Revolution relied on indirect rule via local magnates. The magnates collaborated with the government without becoming officials in any strong sense of the term, had some access to government-backed force, and exercised wide discretion within their own territories: junkers, justices of the peace, lords. Yet the same magnates were potential rivals, possible allies of a rebellious people.

Eventually, European governments reduced their reliance on indirect rule by means of two expensive but effective strategies: (*a*) extending their officialdom to the local community and (*b*) encouraging the creation of police forces that were subordinate to the government rather than to individual patrons, distinct from war-making forces, and therefore less useful as the tools of dissident magnates. In between, however, the builders of national power all played a mixed strategy: eliminating, subjugating, dividing, conquering, cajoling, buying as the occasions presented themselves. The buying manifested itself in exemptions from taxation,

creations of honorific offices, the establishment of claims on the national treasury, and a variety of other devices that made a magnate's welfare dependent on the maintenance of the existing structure of power. In the long run, it all came down to massive pacification and monopolization of the means of coercion.

* * * *

What Do States Do?

. . . Under the general heading of organized violence, the agents of states characteristically carry on four different activities:

1. War making: Eliminating or neutralizing their own rivals outside the territories in which they have clear and continuous priority as wielders of force
2. State making: Eliminating or neutralizing their rivals inside those territories
3. Protection: Eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of their clients
4. Extraction: Acquiring the means of carrying out the first three activities—war making, state making, and protection.

* * * *

War making, state making, protection, and extraction each take a number of forms. Extraction, for instance, ranges from outright plunder to regular tribute to bureaucratized taxation. Yet all four depend on the state's tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of coercion. From the perspectives of those who dominate the state, each of them—if carried on effectively—generally reinforces the others. Thus, a state that successfully eradicates its internal rivals strengthens its ability to extract resources, to wage war, and to protect its chief supporters. In the earlier European experience, broadly speaking, those supporters were typically landlords, armed retainers of the monarch, and churchmen.

Each of the major uses of violence produced characteristic forms of organization. War making yielded armies, navies, and supporting services. State making produced durable instruments of surveillance and control within the territory. Protection relied on the organization of war making and state making but added to it an apparatus by which the protected called forth the protection that was their due, notably through courts and representative assemblies. Extraction brought fiscal and accounting structures into being. The organization and deployment of violence themselves account for much of the characteristic structure of European states.

The general rule seems to have operated like this: The more costly the activity, all other things being equal, the greater was the organizational residue. To the extent, for example, that a given government invested in large standing armies—a very costly, if effective, means of war making—the bureaucracy created to service the army was likely to become bulky. Furthermore, a government building a standing army while controlling a small population was likely to incur greater costs, and therefore to build a bulkier structure, than a government within a populous country. Brandenburg–Prussia was the classic case of high cost for available resources. The Prussian effort to build an army matching those of its larger Continental neighbors created an immense structure; it militarized and bureaucratized much of German social life.

In the case of extraction, the smaller the pool of resources and the less commercialized the economy, other things being equal, the more difficult was the work of extracting resources to sustain war and other governmental activities; hence, the more extensive was the fiscal

apparatus. England illustrated the corollary of that proposition, with a relatively large and commercialized pool of resources drawn on by a relatively small fiscal apparatus. As Gabriel Ardant has argued, the choice of fiscal strategy probably made an additional difference. On the whole, taxes on land were expensive to collect as compared with taxes on trade, especially large flows of trade past easily controlled checkpoints. Its position astride the entrance to the Baltic gave Denmark an extraordinary opportunity to profit from customs revenues.

With respect to state making (in the narrow sense of eliminating or neutralizing the local rivals of the people who controlled the state), a territory populated by great landlords or by distinct religious groups generally imposed larger costs on a conqueror than one of fragmented power or homogeneous culture. This time, fragmented and homogeneous Sweden, with its relatively small but effective apparatus of control, illustrates the corollary.

Finally, the cost of protection (in the sense of eliminating or neutralizing the enemies of the state makers' clients) mounted with the range over which that protection extended. Portugal's effort to bar the Mediterranean to its merchants' competitors in the spice trade provides a textbook case of an unsuccessful protection effort that nonetheless built up a massive structure.

Thus, the sheer size of the government varied directly with the effort devoted to extraction, state making, protection, and, especially, war making but inversely with the commercialization of the economy and the extent of the resource base. What is more, the relative bulk of different features of the government varied with the cost/resource ratios of extraction, state making, protection, and war making. . . .

* * * *

Clearly, war making, extraction, state making, and protection were interdependent. . . . In an idealized sequence, a great lord made war so effectively as to become dominant in a substantial territory, but that war making led to increased extraction of the means of war—men, arms, food, lodging, transportation, supplies, and/or the money to buy them—from the population within that territory. The building up of war-making capacity likewise increased the capacity to extract. The very activity of extraction, if successful, entailed the elimination, neutralization, or cooptation of the great lord's local rivals; thus, it led to state making. As a by-product, it created organization in the form of tax-collection agencies, police forces, courts, exchequers, account keepers; thus it again led to state making. To a lesser extent, war making likewise led to state making through the expansion of military organization itself, as a standing army, war industries, supporting bureaucracies, and (rather later) schools grew up within the state apparatus. All of these structures checked potential rivals and opponents. In the course of making war, extracting resources, and building up the state apparatus, the managers of states formed alliances with specific social classes. The members of those classes loaned resources, provided technical services, or helped ensure the compliance of the rest of the population, all in return for a measure of protection against their own rivals and enemies. As a result of these multiple strategic choices, a distinctive state apparatus grew up within each major section of Europe.

How States Formed

This analysis, if correct, has two strong implications for the development of national states. First, popular resistance to war making and state making made a difference. When ordinary people resisted vigorously, authorities made concessions: guarantees of rights, representative institutions, courts of appeal. Those concessions, in their turn, constrained the later paths of war making and state making. To be sure, alliances with fragments of the ruling class

greatly increased the effects of popular action; the broad mobilization of gentry against Charles I helped give the English Revolution of 1640 a far greater impact on political institutions than did any of the multiple rebellions during the Tudor era.

Second, the relative balance among war making, protection, extraction, and state making significantly affected the organization of the states that emerged from the four activities. To the extent that war making went on with relatively little extraction, protection, and state making, for example, military forces ended up playing a larger and more autonomous part in national politics. Spain is perhaps the best European example. To the extent that protection, as in Venice or Holland, prevailed over war making, extraction, and state making, oligarchies of the protected classes tended to dominate subsequent national politics. From the relative predominance of state making sprang the disproportionate elaboration of policing and surveillance; the Papal States illustrate that extreme. Before the twentieth century, the range of viable imbalances was fairly small. Any state that failed, to put considerable effort into war making was likely to disappear. As the twentieth century wore on, however, it became increasingly common for one state to lend, give, or sell war-making means to another; in those cases, the recipient state could put a disproportionate effort into extraction, protection, and/or state making and yet survive. In our own time, clients of the United States and the Soviet Union provide numerous examples.

This simplified model, however, neglects the external relations that shaped every national state. Early in the process, the distinction between "internal" and "external" remained as unclear as the distinction between state power and the power accruing to lords allied with the state. Later, three interlocking influences connected any given national state to the European network of states. First, there were the flows of resources in the form of loans and supplies, especially loans and supplies devoted to war making. Second, there was the competition among states for hegemony in disputed territories, which stimulated war making and temporarily erased the distinctions among war making, state making, and extraction. Third, there was the intermittent creation of coalitions of states that temporarily combined their efforts to force a given state into a certain form and position within the international network. The war-making coalition is one example, but the peace-making coalition played an even more crucial part: From 1648, if not before, at the ends of wars all effective European states coalesced temporarily to bargain over the boundaries and rulers of the recent belligerents. From that point on, periods of major reorganization of the European state system came in spurts, at the settlement of widespread wars. From each large war, in general, emerged fewer national states than had entered it.

War as International Relations

In these circumstances, war became the normal condition of the international system of states and the normal means of defending or enhancing a position within the system. Why war? No simple answer will do; war as a potent means served more than one end. But surely part of the answer goes back to the central mechanisms of state making: The very logic by which a local lord extended or defended the perimeter within which he monopolized the means of violence, and thereby increased his return from tribute, continued on a larger scale into the logic of war. Early in the process, external and internal rivals overlapped to a large degree. Only the establishment of large perimeters of control within which great lords had checked their rivals sharpened the line between internal and external. . . .

* * * *

If we allow that fragile distinction between "internal" and "external" state-making processes, then we might schematize the history of European state making as three stages (*a*) The differential success of some power holders in "external" struggles establishes the difference between an "internal" and an "external" arena for the deployment of force; (*b*) "external" competition generates "internal" state making; (*c*) "external" compacts among states influence the form and locus of particular states ever more powerfully. In this perspective, state-certifying organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations simply extended the European-based process to the world as a whole. Whether forced or voluntary, bloody or peaceful, decolonization simply completed that process by which existing states leagued to create new ones.

The extension of the Europe-based state-making process to the rest of the world, however, did not result in the creation of states in the strict European image. Broadly speaking, internal struggles such as the checking of great regional lords and the imposition of taxation on peasant villages produced important organizational features of European states: the relative subordination of military power to civilian control, the extensive bureaucracy of fiscal surveillance, the representation of wronged interests via petition and parliament. On the whole, states elsewhere developed differently. The most telling feature of that difference appears in military organization. European states built up their military apparatuses through sustained struggles with their subject populations and by means of selective extension of protection to different classes within those populations. The agreements on protection constrained the rulers themselves making them vulnerable to courts, to assemblies, to withdrawals of credit services, and expertise.

To a larger degree, states that have come into being recently through decolonization or through reallocations of territory by dominant states have acquired their military organization from outside, without the same internal forging of mutual constraints between rulers and ruled. To the extent that outside states continue to supply military goods and expertise in return for commodities, military alliance or both, the new states harbor powerful, unconstrained organizations that easily overshadow all other organizations within their territories. To the extent that outside states guarantee their boundaries, the managers of those military organizations exercise extraordinary power within them. The advantages of military power become enormous, the incentives to seize power over the state as a whole by means of that advantage very strong. Despite the great place that war making occupied in the making of European states, the old national states of Europe almost never experienced the great disproportion between military organization and all other forms of organization that seems the fate of client states throughout the contemporary world. A century ago, Europeans might have congratulated themselves on the spread of civil government throughout the world. In our own time, the analogy between war making and state making, on the one hand, and organized crime, on the other, is becoming tragically apt.

Notes

1. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 150; italics in the original.
2. Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1966), vol. 2, pp. 88–89.

Chapter 29

Getting Away with Murder (Almost)

A Genocide Primer

Levon Chorbajian

Overview

This chapter is intended to introduce readers to genocide by taking stock of the concept's evolution and the various attempts to prevent genocide and to punish its perpetrators. The overriding theme is that efforts at prevention and punishment have been politicized by governments foremost concerned with protecting their national interests. Thus both the legal definition of genocide in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (1948) and its application have been seriously compromised with predictable results.

Introduction

Genocide is a horrific social problem in which large numbers of people are condemned to death. Victims of genocide are not killed, however, for anything they have done. They are neither enemy soldiers nor people executed for capital crimes. Targeted populations are killed for who they are. Their membership in a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group condemns them. In addition to the sheer numbers of victims and the extreme levels of dehumanization and brutality involved, genocide stands out as distinctively insidious because there is generally nothing people can do to save themselves from the intentions of their killers.

None of this is new. In their book, *The History and Sociology of Genocide,* Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn examined nearly two dozen genocides from classical antiquity to the late twentieth century. They analyzed six instances of genocide in the years after World War II alone.[1] Since the book was published in 1990, Darfur, Bosnia, and Myanmar have been added to the list. We can conclude therefore that while genocide is an ancient practice, it is not a past practice, and the need to prevent and punish it remains as urgent as in the aftermath of World War II.

The Core Problem

A number of genocide scholars have noted that "The act is old, but the crime is new".[2] This means that while acts of genocide have been committed throughout recorded history, they were never considered criminal. For many centuries, societies defeated in war were routinely put to the sword by their conquerors. It was not until the mid-20th century that genocide was criminalized when the United Nations General Assembly unanimously passed the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide in December, 1948. Since then, the Convention has been ratified by a large majority of nations, including the United States,

and it provides what is recognized as the legal standard for the crime of genocide under international law.

The passage of the U.N. Convention was a significant milestone in the slow evolution of international law. However, the process of writing the Convention, securing its passage by the U.N. General Assembly, achieving ratification by the U.S. Senate, and finally enforcing it has been politicized and fraught with difficulties. Meanwhile enforcement remains problematic. Nation states, including the U.S., have been active throughout in protecting themselves from real and imagined threats to their perceived interests. The problem at its core concerns the possibility of outside intervention in the internal affairs of nations which clashes with the well-established principle of state sovereignty.[3]

Typically it is the U.N. that would authorize intervention in cases of genocide. However, since the U.N. is an organization of nation states, it is sensitive to issues of state sovereignty. It is not surprising, therefore, that in many instances the U.N. Convention has been ineffective in preventing, stopping, and punishing genocide. We will examine these issues below, beginning with the history of the Convention and the controversies and compromises that went into its formulation.

Raphael Lemkin: His Vision and Its Fate

To the degree that a significant social change can be attributed to a single individual, Raphael Lemkin stands tall as the most important genocide scholar and activist of the 20th century. Lemkin was born in 1900 to a Polish/Jewish farming family.[4] Lemkin read widely and developed an early interest in atrocities and mass killings. He knew about anti-Jewish pogroms taking place periodically in the region where the family lived, and during adolescence he read occasional media accounts of the Armenian Genocide carried out at that time by the Ottoman Turkish state. After the war Lemkin learned that over a million Armenians had been killed, and he asked himself why such events occurred and why the victorious Allies failed to prosecute and punish the vast majority of the genocide's perpetrators.[5] For Lemkin, this was a "moral-threshold moment" that edged him closer to his life's work of criminalizing mass killings of innocent people and punishing their organizers and perpetrators.[6]

Lemkin was trained as an attorney. In the 1920s and 30s he lived in Warsaw and worked as a state prosecutor, legal scholar, lecturer, and writer. When Germany invaded Poland and quickly occupied it in September 1939, Lemkin, a Jew, was now himself targeted for death. He narrowly escaped to neutral Sweden and made his way to the U.S. where he took a position as a law professor, first at Duke University and later at Yale. By the time Lemkin arrived in the U.S. in 1941 he was already recognized as an expert on international law and mass killings. He spent the war years working in Washington and was on the U.S. staff at the Nuremberg trials. In his 1944 book *Axis Power in Occupied Europe* Lemkin invented the word genocide, the union of *genos* meaning ethnicity, race, or tribe with *cide,* to kill.[7]

In one of its first official acts in 1946 the U.N. General Assembly created a working group to write a draft document on genocide. Lemkin assumed a leading role in this group and wrote the document known as the Secretariat's Draft.[8] This comprehensive document defined genocide broadly and criminalized specific practices. These outlawed practices included the attempt to commit genocide, participating in genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, developing techniques to commit genocide and setting up genocide infrastructure such as gallows and gas chambers. It also outlawed " . . . all forms of public propaganda

tending by their systematic and hateful character to promote genocide, or tending to make it appear as a necessary, legitimate, or excusable act." Political and linguistic groups were listed as protected groups. Finally and significantly, the draft called for the establishment of an international court to try those accused of genocide.[9]

The U.S. and the Soviet Union objected to this initial draft, and the General Assembly ordered that it be re-written before it could be submitted for a formal vote. The Soviets insisted that the definition of genocide was 'much too wide'.[10] The U.S. agreed. They both objected to provisions that left them vulnerable to charges of genocide, and they worked to eliminate those provisions. The Soviets insisted that political groups be removed as a protected category. The U.S. objected on grounds of national sovereignty that the " . . . net was cast much too wide." Specifically, the U.S. feared that it could be cited for slavery and the several thousand documented cases of lynchings of African-Americans along with land alienation and cultural destruction of Native American communities.[11]

Lemkin's tripartite conceptualization of genocide consisted of a physical, biological, and cultural dimension:

> The Secretariat's draft [had gone] to considerable lengths to detail the specific conditions of the three forms of genocide. In the category of *physical,* it outlined mass extermination and "slow death" measures (i.e., subjection to conditions of life which, owing to lack of proper housing, clothing, food, hygiene and medical care or excessive work or physical exertion are likely to result in the debilitation or death of individuals; mutilations and biological experiments imposed for other than curative purposes; deprivation of all means of livelihood by confiscation of property, looting, curtailment of work, and the denial of housing and supplies otherwise available to the other inhabitants of the territory concerned.)
>
> The Secretariat's draft took *biological* genocide to mean the restricting of births in the group. It named the methods of sterilization or compulsory abortion, segregation of the sexes and obstacles to marriage. . . .
>
> *Cultural* genocide was defined as the destruction of the specific characteristics of the group. Among the acts specified: forced transfer of children to another human group; forced and systematic exile of individuals representing the culture of the group; the prohibition of the use of the national language, or religious works, or the prohibition of new publications; systematic destruction of historical or religious monuments, or their diversion to alien uses; destruction or dispersion of documents and objects of historical, artistic, or religious value and of objects used in religious worship.[12]

The result of U.S. efforts to revise the Secretariat's Draft was that nearly all the provisions for cultural genocide were removed. The only exception was the last item in Article II of the Convention, "Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group".[13] As a result, the new draft that would soon become the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide was seriously weakened, if not gutted, and the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. were off the hook for possible condemnation or prosecution in their areas of greatest vulnerability.[14]

Once these changes were made the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide was passed unanimously by the General Assembly in 1948. It was a weaker document overall than the Secretariat's Draft, and cultural genocide was not the only loss. The International Court for prosecutions was gone as were all of the specific outlawed actions such as " . . . setting up genocide infrastructure."[15]

Losing Cultural Genocide—Its Significance and a Detailed Example

Lemkin described cultural genocide as "the destruction of the cultural pattern of a group such as its language, its traditions, monuments, archives, libraries and churches. In brief: the shrines of a nation's soul."[16] Even though cultural genocide was excluded from the Genocide Convention, it is a core feature of genocide in practice. It is important, therefore, to understand cultural genocide to grasp the full meaning of genocide itself.

Although the Holocaust of European Jews is better known than the Armenian Genocide, it is the Armenian Genocide that better exemplifies Lemkin's broad, inclusive vision. In the Jewish case, the Holocaust was stopped by the Allied defeat of Nazi Germany. For Armenians, however, the process of cultural eradication and its memory has continued for over a century into the present and illustrates the full range of attacks envisioned by Lemkin. It is the Armenian Genocide, therefore, that allows us to fully understand the meaning of cultural genocide and the full extent of the loss stemming from its removal from the final version of the Genocide Convention.

The Armenian Genocide as Total Genocide

The Armenian Genocide began under the cover of World War I in the spring of 1915 as an orchestrated, centrally planned attack by the Ottoman Turkish state against millennia-old Armenian communities in the Ottoman Empire.[17] It is estimated that between a million and a million and a half Armenians lost their lives. Countless more were lost to the Armenian community through forced conversions to Islam and forced marriages and by the adoption of orphans into Muslim households.[18]

The Ottoman Empire and its patron ally Germany were defeated in World War I. The Empire was dismantled and reconstituted in Asia Minor as the Republic of Turkey in 1923. This new Turkey was founded by Turkish nationalists led by Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk) who rejected the failed multi-culturalism of the Ottoman Empire in favor of Turkey as an explicitly Turkish state. This would lead to further persecutions of surviving Armenian and other Christian communities and, beginning in the late 1920s, to chronic persecutions of Kurds who are Muslim but not Turkish.[19]

An abbreviated version of Turkey's official origin script reads as follows: At the end of World War I Turkey was occupied by Allied military forces. Britain, France, and Italy tried and nearly succeeded in imposing on the last decrepit and compliant Ottoman rulers a peace treaty that would have carved up much of Asia Minor into Western-dominated satellite states. Atatürk was able to organize an armed resistance movement, and he led a bitter, courageous, and ultimately successful war to expel the occupation forces. The result was a new nation state, modernizing and westernizing yet independent of Western imperial control.

This history is aggressively promoted throughout Turkey's institutional structure including its schools. It contains two serious blind spots. The first is that the official story is primordially Turkish. It ignores the presence of non-Turks, especially Armenians and other Christians, in the Ottoman Empire. It expunges their presence, contributions, struggles, and fates from Turkish history, depicting them as unreliable, possibly traitorous allies of Turkey's enemies.[20]

The second omission concerns the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. The official version is that there was a clean break, and a series of rapid-fire reforms including secularism, abolition of the caliphate and sultanate, and new educational and other rights for women lend a measure of credibility to this claim.[21] However, in

one area there was considerable continuity and that is in personnel. Taner Akçam writes that many genocide perpetrators joined the ranks of Atatürk's national movement.

> Participation in the national war of liberation was a vital necessity, a last refuge for all members of *Ittihad ve Terakki* and especially the special organization that masterminded the organization of the genocide. Only two alternatives existed for them. Either they surrendered to be sentenced to hard labour or death, or they fled to Anatolia and organized the national resistance.[22]

Some rose to leadership positions in the Republic of Turkey. Akçam lists ministers of commerce, interior, public affairs, and foreign affairs, and concludes that "This list could be extended by several pages."[23]

The planning and implementation of the Armenian genocide as an act of commission (1913–1923) and of omission (1923–present) represents a continuous process of both physical and memory destruction—all of it consistent with Lemkin's concept of cultural genocide. Quotes from Talaat Pasha, architect and overseer of the Armenian Genocide, and Ismet Inönü, second president of the Republic of Turkey, reveal this continuity. Talaat decreed that "everything must be done to abolish even the word 'Armenia' in Turkey."[24] Inönü, later noted that "it was not only necessary to eradicate centuries-old traditions, beliefs, and customs, but to efface the memory as well."[25]

One way to efface memory is through the physical destruction of markers of alternative histories. During the Armenian Genocide over 1,700 Armenian churches and monasteries were severely damaged or totally destroyed.[26] In the intervening century remaining structures have been ravaged by neglect and various assaults on their physical and cultural integrity. These assaults on churches and monastic complexes include their use as targets in artillery practice, dismemberment for building materials, vandalism, abrasion of carved Armenian inscriptions, redefinition as examples of Seljuk architecture, and conversion to alternative uses ranging from mosques to stables.[27]

The 1928 language law that converted Turkish script from Arabic to the western alphabet was partly implemented to impede access to written materials from the Ottoman period and contributes to effacement of a different sort. Within a short period of time, a new generation of schoolchildren was unable to read the old Arabic script, and as the decades passed ever fewer could read any works or documents produced prior to the late 1920s. In this way, people were effectively cut off from earlier Arabic scripted resources covering the early years of the Republic and the Ottoman past.[28] Destroying all books written in Armenian and other non-Turkish languages was another form of cultural eradication. This included substantial Armenian libraries that had survived the genocide.[29]

While the past was being destroyed or rendered inaccessible, a new officially approved history was being created to replace it. Atatürk laid the foundation when he established the forerunner to the Turkish Historical Society to produce new histories that would fit the nationalist agenda. In all, between 1.5 and 3 million books were published and made widely available during the Kemalist period.[30] These volumes presented history, literature, architectural studies, indeed all areas of scholarly and popular writing in the humanities and social sciences, from a nationalistic, primordially Turkish perspective and have been described collectively as "the backbone of the Turkish national narrative."[31]

Another dimension of this Turkification process is found in the 1938 surname law which required Armenians and other non-Turkish minorities to Turkify their last names.[32] One method of accomplishing this was to substitute the Turkish suffix 'oğlu', signifying son of, for the traditional Armenian equivalent 'ian'.

In their campaign to define Turkish society as exclusively Turkish, government authorities continued a policy initiated during World War I which was to change toponyms. In areas where Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds lived in significant numbers it was not uncommon for communities, peaks, valleys, rivers, and forests to have non-Turkish names. The state systematically catalogued these names, determined their ethnic origins, and gave them Turkish names where none existed. In the end thousands of names were changed in a process that continued into the 1980s.[33] The government also sought out and destroyed old German and French atlases and maps and barred their further import if they designated certain areas as Armenian or Kurdish.[34]

What was created in the 1920s and 30s largely prevails in the present. Few Turks have access to alternative historical information that would reveal a diverse and troubled past, and there is little incentive to seek out such materials. The result is a closed loop, in effect, an invisible, hegemonic totalitarian culture in which people are exposed to official doctrine from diverse sources at an early age with few or no accessible alternative sources of information.[35]

A hypothetical German equivalent would look like this. A latter day fascist regime would create and promote a mandatory pro-Nazi official history expressed in school curricula, national holidays, popular culture, and public statuary commemorating Hitler and his inner circle. Universities, schools, hospitals, national parks, boulevards, mountain peaks, artistic and literary awards would be named after them. And Jews would not be mentioned except as traitors and, perhaps, as unfortunate victims of dire wartime conditions which claimed German and Jewish lives in equal measure.[36]

U.S. Ratification of the Genocide Convention

The U.S. and the Soviet Union played key roles in weakening the original draft of the Genocide Convention. The next major example of politicizing genocide also involved the U.S. and was stretched out over four decades. The U.N. Convention went into effect in 1951 when a sufficient number of countries had ratified it. The U.S. was not among this group, and, in fact, the U.S. Senate would not ratify the Convention until 1988.

The Genocide Convention was brought up three times for Senate ratification; first in 1950, again in 1970, and finally in the 1980s. The U.S. objections were consistent in all three instances and focused on national sovereignty. A typical objection in 1950 came from Sen. Bourke Hickenlooper (R-IA), "[W]e are, in effect, in this Genocide Convention . . . dealing with the question of a certain area of the sovereignty of the United States which amounts to a surrender of that sovereignty."[37]

When the Convention was again brought up for ratification in 1970, Sen. Sam Ervin (D-NC) objected.

> If the Senate should ratify the Genocide Convention, [Article VI of the U.S. Constitution] would automatically make the Convention the law of the land . . . and impose on the United States the obligation to take whatever steps are necessary to make its . . . provisions effective. This means that the provisions of the Genocide Convention would immediately supersede all state laws and practices inconsistent with them, and would nullify all provisions of all acts of Congress and prior treaties of the United States inconsistent with them.[38]

The same objections were made in the late 1980s but this time the objections were turned aside by the so-called Sovereignty Package submitted by three conservative senators, Richard Lugar (R-IN), Orrin Hatch (R-UT), and Jesse Helms (R-NC). The package was ratified by

the Senate and submitted to the U.N. in 1988 along with the U.S. government's ratification of the Genocide Convention. The Sovereignty Package consists of two "reservations" and five "understandings" that all but technically exempt the U.S. from prosecution. Here are the two reservations:

(1) That with reference to Article IX of the Convention, before any dispute to which the United States is a party may be submitted to the International Court of Justice under this article, *the specific consent of the United States is required in each case*.[39]
(2) That nothing in the Convention requires or authorizes legislation or other action by the United States prohibited by the Constitution of the United States *as interpreted by the United States*.[40]

The U.S. Sovereignty Package elicited strong criticism from nine European countries, all of them strong U.S. allies and six of them fellow NATO members.[41]

Other Instances of Politicizing Genocide

An early case involved the documentary film on the Nuremberg trial titled *The Making of Nuremberg: Its Lesson for Today*. The film was completed in 1948 by the U.S. Army and screened throughout the three western zones of Germany in 1949.[42] However, the film was never released for screening to general audiences in the U.S. because the status of Germany had changed by the late 1940s to that of an ally in the western alliance against the Soviet Union. Secretary of the Army Kenneth Royall explained,

> In this country no general release is under consideration. It is my opinion that the theme is contrary to present policies and aims of the government; therefore, it is felt that the picture at this time can be of no significant value to the Army and Nation as a whole.[43]

As Royall makes clear the education of the American public on the full extent of Nazi war crimes and genocide was derailed in favor of enlisting the public to now view Germans favorably as allies in the anti-Communist crusade well under way by 1949. The following are capsule summaries of other instances of political expediency prioritized over historical accuracy and principled action.

The Cambodian Genocide—The conventional and widely disseminated story is that the Cambodian Genocide was carried out by Cambodian communists, the Khmer Rouge, between 1975 and 1979. The Pol Pot government was intent on a form of extreme autarky and emptied the capital Phnom Penh into the countryside where people were forced to produce rice. As many as two million people are estimated to have died from starvation diets, disease, massacres, and summary executions. However, while the Khmer Rouge did engage in brutal killings on a large scale, this was not the whole story.

The Cambodian Genocide followed relentless bombing of the Cambodian countryside by the U.S. from 1969 to 1975 which left the country in "utter ruins."[44] This period of bombing was followed by the Khmer Rouge era and the two are related in ways that were concealed by western politicians and the media. Specifically, the bombing took large areas out of cultivation, and 75% of draft animals were killed. The Khmer Rouge was forced to rely on human labor, much of it from urban areas and brutally imposed on people with no agricultural experience.[45]

The Khmer Rouge government was certainly violent and cruel but not necessarily more deadly than the half dozen years of relentless U.S. air attacks that preceded the Khmer Rouge

coming to power. Demographic and loss of life figures are difficult to estimate but the deaths run into the hundreds of thousands for both the period of U.S. bombing and civil war, and the Pol Pot years.[46] Further media distortions occurred when Communist Vietnam invaded Cambodia and stopped the killing. The Vietnamese received no credit for their intervention and instead were accused of conducting their own "subtle" genocide in Cambodia.[47] Furthermore, the U.S. continued to supply Pol Pot's forces with weapons and food after it was forced into exile in Thailand. This aid enabled the Khmer Rouge to conduct military raids into Cambodia for years. The U.S. also twice intervened to allow Pol Pot to keep the Cambodian seat at the U.N. as payback to the Vietnamese, the long-time enemy that had defeated the U.S. in the Vietnam War. This was also not reported in the mainstream U.S. media.[48]

Cambodia and Indonesia—At the same time that the Cambodian Genocide was taking place, Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony of East Timor to forcibly annex the territory. Killings went on for years and led to an armed resistance. Eventually 100,000 to 300,000 East Timorese lost their lives in what many experts consider a genocide. The political rhetoric and western media coverage of these two genocides differ greatly and reflect the ideological imperatives of the U.S. and the western bloc. The Cambodian Genocide was widely condemned as evidence of what communists do while close U.S. ally Indonesia and its president General Suharto received minimal and bland coverage in the case of East Timor. Certainly there was no hint that this is what capitalists do.[49]

Rwanda—The Rwandan Genocide took place in 1994 and claimed the lives of between 500,000 and 1 million people within a 100 days of carnage. The U.S. could have intervened to prevent it with a modest military force but did not. The Clinton administration worked at the U.N. to cut the U.N. peacekeeping force already on site and prevented the expansion of its limited mandate. Clinton also refused to use the word "genocide" to describe events in Rwanda even though it clearly fit U.N. Convention standards for fear that acknowledging genocide would pressure the U.S. to intervene. The Clinton administration, as *The Guardian* put it, " . . . felt the US had no interests in Rwanda, a small central African country with no minerals or strategic value."[50]

Armenian Genocide Recognition—The U.S. government has actively opposed all attempts to pass a congressional resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide. This refusal is largely geopolitical and economic in nature. Turkey is a NATO ally and an important trading partner with the U.S., and the U.S. government does not want to see this relationship threatened. Whenever there have been Armenian Genocide Recognition resolutions brought up in Congress, Turkey has aggressively used its extensive lobbying apparatus and direct contacts with key decision makers to defeat these proposals. The White House and State and Defense Departments have joined in swaying congressional votes to kill these resolutions.[51]

International Courts—There are two permanent international courts to try defendants for war crimes, gross violations of human rights, and genocide.[52] Both are based in The Hague. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) or World Court is the main legal arm of the U.N. and began operations in 1946. The ICJ, like the U.N., is hampered by the sovereignty principle and is a creature of political power. The court lacks enforcement power, and it took no action regarding genocide until the U.S. ratified the U.N. Convention in the late 1980s and then only rarely since. The case of Nicaragua illustrates the limitations of the overall structure of redress in providing relief to small nations at odds with world powers. In 1979 Nicaraguan rebels overthrew several generations of U.S. backed Somoza family dictatorships and instituted a series of socialist reforms. The U.S. responded by mining Nicaragua's harbors and creating counter-revolutionary forces (the Contras) to carry out sabotage and terrorist attacks inside Nicaragua.[53] In this instance the ICJ actually ruled in favor of Nicaragua and

ordered the U.S. to cease its sponsorship of counter-revolutionary terrorist forces and to pay reparations to Nicaragua. The U.S. rejected this finding and refused to pay. When Nicaragua tried to appeal to the U.N. Security Council, the U.S. blocked the appeal thus closing off Nicaragua's legal options.[54]

The second court is the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was created in 1998 with the signing of the Rome Statute. The court began operations in 2002. It hears cases against individuals accused of very serious crimes such as genocide. The U.S. refused to sign on to the Rome Statute and is not a party to it, but 123 other countries are. The court has been criticized for not taking difficult, contentious cases. Most of its cases have been in Africa, and African nations have been critical of what they consider a bias. However, in November of 2017, the ICC Prosecutor asked for a ruling on whether there was sufficient evidence for a trial on Afghanistan focusing on the Afghan state, the Taliban, and the U.S. military and CIA. It would be very unusual to bring the U.S. to trial on charges such as war crimes and genocide, and the U.S. is not expected to co-operate with the investigation. The inquiry is now in preliminary investigation to see if there is warrant to take the case to trial.[55]

There were also two independent tribunals created under powers granted to the Security Council under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter. These are the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). Both have tried and convicted genocide perpetrators.[56] Long-time U.N. official Yves Biegbeder offers this assessment:

> In spite of the imperfections and failings of both the ICTY and the ICTR, the tribunals have contributed to the erosion of the impunity of top leaders and to the verification and recording of historical facts. Following the victors' justice of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals, they have made international criminal justice a reality, albeit an imperfect and temporary one.[57]

Khmer Rouge Tribunal—It was over 30 years after the Khmer Rouge were overthrown that anyone was tried for gross violations of human rights, war crimes, or genocide. Pol Pot was long dead by 2011 when the Tribunal finally convened. The court format was agreed upon by the U.N. and the Cambodian government. It was held in Cambodia with joint Cambodian and western judges presiding. As usual the U.S. intervened to protect itself from prosecution by insisting that the tribunal could only consider acts committed between 1975 and 1979 and only within the borders of Cambodia. Under those rules there could be no consideration of the deaths of hundreds of thousands from U.S. air strikes prior to 1975. In the end only five elderly people were brought to trial. One died during the proceedings, one was not tried because of Alzheimer's, and three were sentenced to life imprisonment.[58]

The Future—Genocide in the 21st Century

If we consider the issue of genocide within the context of climate change and side with the overwhelming majority of scientists who argue that the planet's climate is changing due to trapped carbon dioxide and other greenhouse emissions, we are confronted by a number of unsettling realities.[59] These include record high temperatures, ocean warming, melting polar ice sheets, rising sea levels, intense forest fires, extreme weather events in the form of more frequent category 4 and 5 hurricanes, drought or extreme rainfall depending on the region, and a shift in the Gulf Stream. Among the predictable consequences of these changes in addition to trillions of dollars of losses in residential and commercial real estate and infrastructure are large scale migrations of people and increased competition for safe areas of

habitation and land suitable for food production. If past history is to serve as a guide, it tells us that these are the very sorts of conditions that lead to political extremism, demagoguery, fascism, war, and, in some instances, genocide.[60] While these are not inevitable outcomes, it will take aggressive and concerted action to avoid them, and at this point in time it appears that such action is not in the offing. Thus, unfortunately, a future with a wide array of social disorganization, including genocide, seems likely.

This grim assessment recalls Lemkin's own reservations and his hopes. He did not believe that the Genocide Convention would end genocide. He thought World War I and World War II memories would dim and complacency would set in. But he did hope that "moral condemnation of the crime would come easier" and that the U.N. Convention would serve as a "framework . . . a rallying point for thinking and acting."[61] This offers at least the possibility that humanity in the face of unprecedented dangers will rise to the occasion in ways that affirm rather than extinguish life.

Notes

1. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 378–414.
2. Roger Smith, "Human Destructiveness and Politics: The Twentieth Century as an Age of Genocide" in Isidor Wallimann and Michael Dobkowski, (eds.,) *Genocide and the Modern Age* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1987), 28. Also, Roger Smith, "State Power and Genocidal Intent: On the Uses of Genocide in the Twentieth Century" in Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian, (eds.,) *Studies in Comparative Genocide* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1999), 9.
3. Omer Bartov, *"Introduction" to: Totally Unofficial: Raphael Lemkin and the Genocide Convention,* (ed.) by Dan Eshet (Brookline, MA.: Facing History and Ourselves, 2007), xi–xii.
4. His birthplace was in the Russian Empire at the time of his birth, part of Poland in the interwar years, and is now in Belarus.
5. Vahakn Dadrian and Taner Akçam, *Judgment at Istanbul* (N.Y.: Berghahn Books, 2011) on the largely, if not completely, successful subversion of the trials of Turkish perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide.
6. Concept coined by Peter Balakian, "Raphael Lemkin, Cultural Destruction, and the Armenian Genocide," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*. 27, # 1 (Spring, 2013): 58.
7. Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79. Other terms such as democide, politicide, and gendercide have been suggested, but they have more specific meanings or different emphases, and genocide remains the preferred term in media and scholarship. For alternative definitions of genocide see Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2017), 23–27 and 34–37.
8. Donna-Lee Frieze, (ed.,) *Totally Unofficial: The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Also, John Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention* (N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 88.
9. Lawrence J. Leblanc, *The United States and the Genocide Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 26–27. Cooper, 90–91, 123–124, 128, 158–159, 170.
10. Leblanc, 27. Cooper, 108.
11. Ward Churchill, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1997), 368–383 for an extensive discussion of these issues. Churchill also notes that Lemkin's original formulation " . . . would have taken in the virtual entirety of US Indian policy from the 1880s onwards," 366. Cooper, 199, 203–208, 224–225. See also David Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1992); Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and the American Indian Genocide* (Boston: South End Press, 2005); Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014).
12. Robert Davis and Mark Zannis. *The Genocide Machine in Canada: The Pacification of the North* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1973), 19–20.

13. Orphanages and schools run by agents of perpetrator societies play a special role in stripping children of their original cultures. For Armenians see Karnig Panian's autobiographical *Goodbye, Antoura* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015); for Native Americans, Ward Churchill, *Kill the Indian, Save the Man* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2004) and David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); and for Kurds, Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2011), 204–217.
14. The African-American Civil Rights Congress did attempt to use the U.N. Convention to highlight the racial dictatorship in the U.S. In 1951 the manuscript *We Charge Genocide* was delivered to U.N. officials in New York and Paris. Lynchings, executions, and disenfranchisement were cited as examples conforming to U.N. Convention standards for genocide. This effort received favorable press in Europe, the Soviet bloc, and the African-American press. It was heavily criticized by U.S. government officials and generally in the mainstream U.S. media. See William Patterson, *We Charge Genocide* (N.Y.: Civil Rights Congress, 1951).
15. There have been numerous criticisms of the Convention including the exclusion of political groups and debates over the meaning of intent and of in whole or in part. For an extended theoretical discussion of these and related issues see Martin Shaw, *What Is Genocide?* (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2015). The most serious objection is that the focus on killing in the final document all but eliminates cultural genocide as a genocide criterion. See Churchill, *Little*, 399–437 for an extended discussion.
16. Frieze, 172.
17. Alongside more than a century of Ottoman Turkish and Republic of Turkey genocide denials, extensive documentation of the Armenian Genocide has been compiled in numerous formats. German archival materials, Wolfgang Gust, (ed.,) *The Armenian Genocide: Evidence from the German Foreign Office Archives, 1915–1916* (N.Y.: Berghahn Books, 2013); history based on Ottoman archival and other primary source materials, Taner Akçam, *The Young Turks' Crime against Humanity: The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); eyewitness accounts, James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915–1916* (London: Gomidas Institute, 2005); oral histories, Verjiné Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: Gitutiun Publishing House, National Academy of Sciences, 2011), and Donald Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); memoir of the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918); and consular report, Leslie Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Aristide D. Caratzas, Publisher, 1989).
18. There are numerous accounts of Armenian losses stemming from the Genocide. See the Armenian Genocide Reparations Study Group, *Resolution with Justice: Reparations for the Armenian Genocide*, 20–24. Retrieved on October 22, 2018. http://www.armeniangenocidereparations:info. Also Rouben Adalian "A Conceptual Method for Examining the Consequences of the Armenian Genocide" in Chorbajian and Shirinian, (eds.,) 47–59; Taner Akçam and Umit Kurt, *The Spirit of the Laws: The Plunder of Wealth in the Armenian Genocide* (N.Y.: Berghahn Books, 2015); and Hrayr Karagueuzian and Yair Auron, *A Perfect Injustice: Genocide and the Theft of Armenian Wealth* (N.Y.: Routledge, 2009).
19. Ungör, 55–169. On Greek and Assyrian genocides in the same locales see George Shirinian, (ed.), *Genocide in the Ottoman Empire: Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks* (N.Y.: Berghahn Books, 2017).
20. On the Armenians as a scapegoat people see Fatma Müge Goçek, *The Denial of Violence: Ottoman Past, Turkish Present, and Collective Violence Against the Armenians, 1789–2009 (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2014);* Taner Akçam, *Young Turks*, ix–xi, 139–182; James J. Reid "Philosophy of State-Subject Relations, Ottoman Concepts of Tyranny and the Demonization of Subjects: Conservative Ottomanism as a Source of Genocidal Behaviour, 1821–1918" in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 60–91.
21. Despite the Republic of Turkey's efforts to dissociate itself from the Ottoman Empire, various post World War I arbitration cases make it clear that Turkey was considered the successor state of the Ottoman Empire. The most cited is the 1925 Ottoman Public Debt Arbitration. An English language summary of the French original is found at https://www.jstor.org/stable/2188817?.
22. Akçam, "The Genocide of the Armenians and the Silence of the Turks" in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 143.
23. Akçam, "The Genocide. . . . " in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 143.
24. Anush Hovanissian, "Turkey: A Cultural Genocide" in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 147.

25. Üngör, 229.
26. Dickran Kouymjian, "The Destruction of Armenian Historical Monuments as a Continuation of the Turkish Policy of Genocide" in Gerard Libaridian, (ed.,) *A Crime of Silence, The Armenian Genocide: The Permanent People's Tribunal* (London: Zed Books, 1985), 174–175.
27. Kouymjian, 174–175; Anush Hovanissian in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 150–151; *Another Genocide after the Genocide* (Aachen, Germany: Research on Armenian Architecture, 2015). This last volume contains nearly 400 pages of text, maps, and before and after photographs of architectural monuments documenting their destruction. Additional photographs in Kouymjian, 177–183 and Balakian, 74–81.
28. Akçam in Chorbajian and Shirinian, 136 and Üngör, 224–226.
29. Üngör, 226–227.
30. Üngör, 228–230.
31. Üngör, 228.
32. Üngör, 231–232.
33. Üngör, 240–245.
34. Üngör, 242.
35. Üngör, 255. There are occasional blades of grass coming up through the concrete calling attention to suppressed pasts. Consider the publicity accorded the assassination of Armenian human rights activist Hrant Dink in 2007, the publication of Fethiye Çetin's *My Grandmother: A Memoir* (N.Y.: Verso, 2008), charges of "insulting Turkishness" levelled at Nobel Prize winning novelist Orhan Pamuk for his Swiss media statement that a million Armenians and 30,000 Kurds had been killed, occasional academic conferences at more liberal Turkish universities, and the Turkish language publications of Taner Akçam's histories of the Armenian Genocide.
36. Denial of the Armenian Genocide began early in the genocidal process in May of 1915. Armenians and Turks suffering in equal measure is one of several standard techniques of Armenian Genocide denial deployed by Turkey. Gust, 199–202 and Akçam, *Young Turks*, x–xiii, 373–447.
37. Churchill, *Little*, 394, fn 30. The objections underscore the nationalism and anti-internationalism of certain strains of U.S. political thought.
38. Churchill, *Little*, 381.
39. Churchill, *Little*, 385. Italics added. Article IX stipulates that disputes of interpretation and application of the Convention can be taken for resolution to the International Court of Justice at the request of any of the parties to the dispute.
40. Churchill, *Little*, 385. Italics added.
41. Churchill, *Little*, 387. Technically the U.S. could be cited despite the Sovereignty Package if it agreed to be but as a practical matter the U.S. has exempted itself.
42. And then in West Germany, created in May, 1949.
43. Sandra Schulberg, "Filmmakers for the Prosecution The Making of Nuremberg: Its Lessons for Today" 29. Retrieved on October 22, 2018. Available at Rev_May1,2012_Schulberg_Filmmakers_for_the_Prosecution.
44. Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent* (N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 2002), 260.
45. Herman and Chomsky, 264.
46. For mortality estimates from several sources see Herman and Chomsky, 263. They conclude " . . . the toll under phase II of 'the genocide' (Khmer Rouge) is somewhat greater than under phase I (U.S. bombing), although not appreciably different in scale." See 260–296 for an extended discussion.
47. Herman and Chomsky, 261.
48. For additional references see Herman and Chomsky, 260–296; Michael Vickery, *Cambodia: 1975–1982* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2000); Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power, and Genocide under the Khmer Rouge, 1975–1979* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).
49. Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), 80–81, 108–109, 155–158 and Herman and Chomsky, 33, 284–285 and 301–303.
50. "US Chose to Ignore Rwanda Genocide". Retrieved on October 22, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/mar/31/usa/rwanda.
51. On one instance of a failed resolution see Glenn Kessler, "White House and Turkey Fight Bill on Armenia," *Washington Post*, (October 10, 2007), on-line.
52. There are other courts trying people for war crimes and related offenses including the international tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the Special Court for Sierra Leone, and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers.

53. Holly Sklar, *Washington's War on Nicaragua* (Boston: South End Press, 1999), 94–169 and Peter Kornbluh, *Nicaragua, The Price of Intervention* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies 1987), 25–92.
54. Fred Morrison, "Legal Answers in the Nicaraguan Opinion," *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 81, # 160, (1987): 160–166.
55. Katherine Gallagher, "The ICC Must Hold the US Accountable for Crimes in Afghanistan," Retrieved on November 31, 2018. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb16/icc.us.accountable/for/crimes/Afghanistan. Lisa Clifford, "Afghanistan and the ICC: A 'Brave' First Step, but a Long Road Ahead," June 23, 2018. Retrieved on October 22, 2018. https://www.irinnews/authors/lisa-clifford-O. The stark U.S. response was delivered by National Security Advisor John Bolton in a speech before The Federalist Society in September, 2018. Bolton said, "We will not cooperate with the ICC. We will provide no assistance to the ICC. We will not join the ICC. We will let the ICC die on its own. After all, for all intents and purposes, the ICC is already dead to us." Retrieved on October 22, 2018. The full text is available at https://www.theepochtimes.com/speech-transcript-john-bolton-on-u-s-policy-toward-the-international-criminal-court_2656808.html.
56. Yves Beigbeder, *International Criminal Tribunals: Justice and Politics* (Basingstoke, U.K.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 51–106.
57. Beigbeder, 106.
58. Seth Mydans, "11 years, $300 million, and 3 Convictions: Was the Khmer Rouge Tribunal Worth It?" (April 10, 2017). Retrieved on October 22, 2018. http://www.nytimes.com/2017/cambodia-khmer-rouge-united-nations-tribunal.html.
59. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018 Report. http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/session48/pr181008_P48__spm_en.pdf. Retrieved on November 25, 2018; Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 2015); Fred Magdoff and Chris Williams, *Creating an Ecological Society* (N.Y.: Monthly Review Press, 2017).
60. Jürgen Zimmerer, *Climate Change and Genocide: Environmental Violence in the 21st Century* (New York: Routledge: 2009).
61. Frieze, xxiii–xxiv.

Chapter 30

The New Jim Crow

Michelle Alexander

Introduction

Jarvious Cotton cannot vote. Like his father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and great-great-grandfather, he has been denied the right to participate in our electoral democracy. Cotton's family tree tells the story of several generations of black men who were born in the United States but who were denied the most basic freedom that democracy promises—the freedom to vote for those who will make the rules and laws that govern one's life. Cotton's great-great-grandfather could not vote as a slave. His great-grandfather was beaten to death by the Ku Klux Klan for attempting to vote. His grandfather was prevented from voting by Klan intimidation. His father was barred from voting by poll taxes and literacy tests. Today, Jarvious Cotton cannot vote because he, like many black men in the United States, has been labeled a felon and is currently on parole.[1]

Cotton's story illustrates, in many respects, the old adage "The more things change, the more they remain the same." In each generation, new tactics have been used for achieving the same goals—goals shared by the Founding Fathers. Denying African Americans citizenship was deemed essential to the formation of the original union. Hundreds of years later, America is still not an egalitarian democracy. The arguments and rationalizations that have been trotted out in support of racial exclusion and discrimination in its various forms have changed and evolved, but the outcome has remained largely the same. An extraordinary percentage of black men in the United States are legally barred from voting today, just as they have been throughout most of American history. They are also subject to legalized discrimination in employment, housing, education, public benefits, and jury service, just as their parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents once were.

What has changed since the collapse of Jim Crow has less to do with the basic structure of our society than with the language we use to justify it. In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don't. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color "criminals" and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind. Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you're labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination—employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service—are suddenly legal. As a criminal, you have scarcely more rights, and arguably less respect, than a black man living in Alabama at the height of Jim Crow. We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it.

The Lockdown

We may think we know how the criminal justice system works. Television is overloaded with fictional dramas about police, crime, and prosecutors—shows such as *Law & Order*. These fictional dramas, like the evening news, tend to focus on individual stories of crime, victimization, and punishment, and the stories are typically told from the point of view of law enforcement. A charismatic police officer, investigator, or prosecutor struggles with his own demons while heroically trying to solve a horrible crime. He ultimately achieves a personal and moral victory by finding the bad guy and throwing him in jail. That is the made-for-TV version of the criminal justice system. It perpetuates the myth that the primary function of the system is to keep our streets safe and our homes secure by rooting out dangerous criminals and punishing them.

Those who have been swept within the criminal justice system know that the way the system actually works bears little resemblance to what happens on television or in movies. Full-blown trials of guilt or innocence rarely occur; many people never even meet with an attorney; witnesses are routinely paid and coerced by the government; police regularly stop and search people for no reason whatsoever; penalties for many crimes are so severe that innocent people plead guilty, accepting plea bargains to avoid harsh mandatory sentences; and children, even as young as fourteen, are sent to adult prisons. Rules of law and procedure, such as "guilt beyond a reasonable doubt" or "probable cause" or "reasonable suspicion," can easily be found in court cases and law-school textbooks but are much harder to find in real life.

Our focus is the War on Drugs. The reason is simple: Convictions for drug offenses are the single most important cause of the explosion in incarceration rates in the United States. Drug offenses alone account for two-thirds of the rise in the federal inmate population and more than half of the rise in state prisoners between 1985 and 2000.[2] Approximately a half-million people are in prison or jail for a drug offense today, compared to an estimated 41,100 in 1980—an increase of 1,100 percent.[3] Drug arrests have tripled since 1980. As a result, more than 31 million people have been arrested for drug offenses since the drug war began.[4] Nothing has contributed more to the systematic mass incarceration of people of color in the United States than the War on Drugs.

Before we begin our tour of the drug war, it is worthwhile to get a couple of myths out of the way. The first is that the war is aimed at ridding the nation of drug "kingpins" or big-time dealers. Nothing could be further from the truth. The vast majority of those arrested are *not* charged with serious offenses. In 2005, for example, four out of five drug arrests were for possession, and only one out of five was for sales. Moreover, most people in state prison for drug offenses have *no* history of violence or significant selling activity.[5]

The second myth is that the drug war is principally concerned with dangerous drugs. Quite to the contrary, arrests for marijuana possession—a drug less harmful than tobacco or alcohol—accounted for nearly 80 percent of the growth in drug arrests in the 1990s.[6] Despite the fact that most drug arrests are for nonviolent minor offenses, the War on Drugs has ushered in an era of unprecedented punitiveness.

The percentage of drug arrests that result in prison sentences (rather than dismissal, community service, or probation) has quadrupled, resulting in a prison-building boom the likes of which the world has never seen. In two short decades, between 1980 and 2000, the number of people incarcerated in our nation's prisons and jails soared from roughly 300,000 to more than 2 million. By the end of 2007, more than 7 million Americans—or one in every 31 adults—were behind bars, on probation, or on parole.[7]

More African Americans are under correctional control today—in prison or jail, on probation or parole—than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began.[8] The mass incarceration of people of color is a big part of the reason that a black child born today is

less likely to be raised by both parents than a black child born during slavery.[9] The absence of black fathers from families across America is not simply a function of laziness, immaturity, or too much time watching Sports Center. Thousands of black men have disappeared into prisons and jails, locked away for drug crimes that are largely ignored when committed by whites.

The clock has been turned back on racial progress in America, though scarcely anyone seems to notice. All eyes are fixed on people like Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey, who have defied the odds and risen to power, fame, and fortune. For those left behind, especially those within prison walls, the celebration of racial triumph in America must seem a tad premature. More black men are imprisoned today than at any other moment in our nation's history. More are disenfranchised today than in 1870, the year the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified prohibiting laws that explicitly deny the right to vote on the basis of race.[10] Young black men today may be just as likely to suffer discrimination in employment, housing, public benefits, and jury service as a black man in the Jim Crow era—discrimination that is perfectly legal, because it is based on one's criminal record.

This is the new normal, the new racial equilibrium.

The launching of the War on Drugs and the initial construction of the new system required the expenditure of tremendous political initiative and resources. Media campaigns were waged; politicians blasted "soft" judges and enacted harsh sentencing laws; poor people of color were vilified. The system now, however, requires very little maintenance or justification. In fact, if you are white and middle class, you might not even realize the drug war is still going on. Most high school and college students today have no recollection of the political and media frenzy surrounding the drug war in the early years. They were young children when the war was declared, or not even born yet. Crack is out; terrorism is in.

Today, the political fanfare and the vehement, racialized rhetoric regarding crime and drugs are no longer necessary. Mass incarceration has been normalized, and all of the racial stereotypes and assumptions that gave rise to the system are now embraced (or at least internalized) by people of all colors, from all walks of life, and in every major political party. We may wonder aloud "where have the black men gone?" but deep down we already know. It is simply taken for granted that, in cities like Baltimore and Chicago, the vast majority of young black men are currently under the control of the criminal justice system or branded criminals for life. This extraordinary circumstance—unheard of in the rest of the world—is treated here in America as a basic fact of life, as normal as separate water fountains were just a half century ago.

How It Works

This, in brief, is how the system works: The War on Drugs is the vehicle through which extraordinary numbers of black men are forced into the cage. The entrapment occurs in three distinct phases, The first stage is the roundup. Vast numbers of people are swept into the criminal justice system by the police, who conduct drug operations primarily in poor communities of color. They are rewarded in cash—through drug forfeiture laws and federal grant programs—for rounding up as many people as possible, and they operate unconstrained by constitutional rules of procedure that once were considered inviolate. Police can stop, interrogate, and search anyone they choose for drug investigations, provided they get "consent." Because there is no meaningful check on the exercise of police discretion, racial biases are granted free reign. In fact, police are allowed to rely on race as a factor in selecting whom to stop and search (even though people of color are no more likely to be guilty of drug crimes than whites)—effectively guaranteeing that those who are swept into the system are primarily black and brown.

The conviction marks the beginning of the second phase: the period of formal control. Once arrested, defendants are generally denied meaningful legal representation and pressured to plead guilty whether they are or not. Prosecutors are free to "load up" defendants with extra charges, and their decisions cannot be challenged for racial bias. Once convicted, due to the drug war's harsh sentencing laws, drug offenders in the United States spend more time under the criminal justice system's formal control—in jail or prison, on probation or parole—than drug offenders anywhere else in the world. While under formal control, virtually every aspect of one's life is regulated and monitored by the system, and any form of resistance or disobedience is subject to swift sanction. This period of control may last a lifetime, even for those convicted of extremely minor, nonviolent offenses, but the vast majority of those swept into the system are eventually released. They are transferred from their prison cells to a much larger, invisible cage.

The final stage has been dubbed by some advocates as the period of invisible punishment.[11] This term, first coined by Jeremy Travis, is meant to describe the unique set of criminal sanctions that are imposed on individuals after they step outside the prison gates, a form of punishment that operates largely outside of public view and takes effect outside the traditional sentencing framework. These sanctions are imposed by operation of law rather than decisions of a sentencing judge, yet they often have a greater impact on one's life course than the months or years one actually spends behind bars. These laws operate collectively to ensure that the vast majority of convicted offenders will never integrate into mainstream, white society. They will be discriminated against, legally, for the rest of their lives—denied employment, housing, education, and public benefits. Unable to surmount these obstacles, most will eventually return to prison and then be released again, caught in a closed circuit of perpetual marginality.

In recent years, advocates and politicians have called for greater resources devoted to the problem of "prisoner re-entry," in view of the unprecedented numbers of people who are released from prison and returned to their communities every year. While the terminology is well intentioned, it utterly fails to convey the gravity of the situation facing prisoners upon their release. People who have been convicted of felonies almost never truly reenter the society they inhabited prior to their conviction. Instead, they enter a separate society, a world hidden from public view, governed by a set of oppressive and discriminatory rules and laws that do not apply to everyone else. They become members of an undercaste—an enormous population of predominately black and brown people who, because of the drug war, are denied basic rights and privileges of American citizenship and are permanently relegated to an inferior status. This is the final phase, and there is no going back.

Notes

1. Jarvious Cotton was a plaintiff in *Cotton v. Fordice,* 157 F.3d 388 (5th Cir. 1998), which held that Mississippi's felon disenfranchisement provision had lost its racially discriminatory taint. The information regarding Cotton's family tree was obtained by Emily Bolton on March 29, 1999, when she interviewed Cotton at Mississippi State Prison. Jarvious Cotton was released on parole in Mississippi, a state that denies voting rights to parolees.
2. See Marc Mauer, *Race to Incarcerate,* rev. ed. (New York: The New Press, 2006), 33.
3. Marc Mauer and Ryan King, *A 25-Year Quagmire: The "War on Drugs" and Its Impact on American Society* (Washington, D.C.: Sentencing Project, 2007), 2.
4. Mauer and King, 3.
5. Testimony of Marc Mauer, Executive Director of the Sentencing Project, Prepared for the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, 111th Cong., *Hearing on Unfairness in Federal Cocaine Sentencing: Is It Time to Crack the 100 to 1 Disparity?,* May 21, 2009, 2.

6. Mauer and King, 2–3.
7. Ryan King and Marc Mauer, *The War on Marijuana* (New York: Sentencing Project, 2005), documenting the dramatic increase in marijuana arrests. Marijuana is a relatively harmless drug. The 1988 surgeon general's report lists tobacco as a more dangerous drug than marijuana, and Francis Young, an administrative law judge for the Drug Enforcement Administration found there are no credible medical reports to suggest that consuming marijuana, in any dose, has ever caused a single death. U.S. Department of Justice Drug Enforcement Administration, Opinion and Recommended Ruling, Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Decision of Administrative Law Judge Francis L. Young in the *Matter of Marijuana Rescheduling Petition,* Docket no. 86–22, Sept. 6, 1988, 56–57. By comparison, tobacco kills roughly 390,000 Americans annually, and alcohol is responsible for some 150,000 U.S. deaths a year. See Doug Bandow, "War on Drugs or War on America?" *Stanford Law and Policy Review* 3: 242, 245 (1991).
8. One in eleven black adults was under correctional supervision at year end 2007, or approximately 2.4 million people. See Pew Center on the States, *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections* (Washington, DC: Pew Charitable Trusts, 2009). According to the 1850 Census, approximately 1.7 million adults (ages 15 and older) were slaves.
9. See Andrew J. Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage,* rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press. 1992), 110.
10. See Glenn C. Loury, *Race, Incarceration, and American Values* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2008), commentary by Pam Karlan.
11. See Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind, eds., (New York: The New Press, 2002), and Jeremy Travis, *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Press, 2005).

Section VII

Revolution and Social Movements

At the start of this book we used Steven Lukes' concept of "three-dimensional power" as the central framework for our readings on power. The most fundamental form of power, Lukes argued, is that which is not readily apparent because it is taken for granted. From this perspective, power is so thoroughly embedded in the pattern of everyday life that we cannot see how it shapes us. If this is the case, then what is to be done? How can we challenge power if we are not aware of its presence in our lives? All of the writers on power that we examined earlier would agree that, despite the thoroughness with which social institutions organize power in the interests of dominant groups, power is never absolute. Marx, for example, saw social phenomena as inherently contradictory, always containing elements of opposition that carried the potential to undermine the existing social order and construct a new one. Gramsci's understanding of hegemony as a negotiated form of power suggested the transformative potential of subordinate groups withholding their consent. Foucault's argument that power is dispersed throughout society simultaneously disperses the sites of struggle between subordinate and dominant groups. From whatever perspective, the critical approach to power suggests that divisions emerge from within the power elite on particular issues, and economic or political crises call into question, if only momentarily, established patterns of power. There are always contradictions found in social institutions, and these contradictions provide opportunities for people to challenge institutionalized power. The process of racial segregation in the South, for example, produced a sufficiently cohesive African-American community that possessed the leadership and material resources to organize a sustained social movement for civil rights that eventually destroyed legal segregation. Indeed, to take this example further, the use of nonviolent civil disobedience by civil rights activists used the legal institutions that enforced segregation to raise the material and moral cost of maintaining segregation that political authorities were forced to acknowledge that it could no longer be accepted. These contradictions provide necessary structural opportunities for social change, but by themselves they are not sufficient to make such change. People must be able to recognize opportunities as they unfold and have the resources and willingness to take advantage of them as they unfold.

The primary way in which people challenge power is through social movements. Social movements are "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities" (Tarrow 1994: 3–4). It is notable that all of the readings in Section I on power were written in the context of movements for social change: Marx and nineteenth-century revolutionary movements, Marcuse and the New Left of the 1960s, Gramsci and the revolutionary movements following the First World War, Foucault and post-modernist theory, Butler and feminism and Fanon and anti-colonial movements. This is also the case for many articles in later sections of the book. Social movements call into question the taken-for-granted patterns of institutional power

that these theorists discussed. They do so by engaging in sustained disruption of these taken-for-granted patterns in pursuit of shared goals held by people with a collective identity. United States history can be seen as a series of attempts by people, who at various times and for various reasons were excluded from or marginalized by the political process, to make real the promise of democracy. Every advance in democracy and equality in history has been the result of conflict, of mobilization by marginalized, oppressed, and exploited social groups that challenged the legitimacy of existing social institutions. The readings in this section address some important issues in social movement organization as well as some important case studies of social movements.

The article by Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, taken from their study of "poor people's movements"--movements of the unemployed, industrial workers, the civil rights movement, and the welfare rights movement)--conveys a sense of the power that social movements have to make change. At the same time, however, they are critical of social movement organizations' inability to maintain their oppositional politics in the face of institutional resistance and co-optation. Popular insurgency may succeed in stimulating elite concessions, but these concessions are designed to absorb movement energies into acceptable channels. As a result, movement organizations face the choice of reining in insurgency in return for concessions or, should they seek more radical change, running the risk of being marginalized. Piven and Cloward conclude that the institutional framework in which social movement organizations operate, rather than internal factors such as resources or leadership, are most important for understanding the potential of social movement organizations. Thus, a movement organization that "fails" in a conventional sense (due to the external institutional forces identified by Piven and Cloward) can have important results in generating resources for further social movement activism. With its focus on the external forces in which social movements operate, Piven and Cloward's article is a good example of the political process model of social movements.

Mark Neocleous argues that most analysts answer the question of why the Nazis employed the world socialist in their party's name—National Socialist—by defining that choice as a trick or lure to move unsuspecting left voters into the Nazi camp. We would be better served, Neocleous argues, if we investigate instead just what it is the Nazis meant by their use of the word socialist. The answer is partly to increase the party's appeal to left voters, but only partly. More importantly the name National Socialist—shortened to Nazi--substitutes the solidarity of workers within nations for communism's international solidarity of workers everywhere. It was Marxism's call for workers of the world to unite that was anathema to the Nazis. Neocleous writes, ". . .fascists know full well that their enemy is on the left: it is after, all, left-wing and not right-wing activists who fill the cells of fascist prisons. Conservative elites. . .do not constitute the same kind of danger to fascism as socialism and communism. If fascism is revolutionary, then it is a particular form of conservative revolution, and thus a revolution from the right."

Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons' article on right-wing populist movements is significant for expanding our understanding of social movements beyond those whose goal is the reduction of social inequality. Right-wing populist movements have emerged in response to the successes of more traditionally defined social movements. In identifying the major interpretive themes of these organizations—such as a concern with "producers" over "unproductive" elites and subordinate groups, the use of scapegoating, and an apocalyptic narrative—Berlet and Lyons focus on the cultural resources that allow rightwing populist movements to advocate an anti-elitist politics that simultaneously maintains existing social inequalities. In their most extreme forms, right-wing populist movements become the organizational expression of fascism as discussed in the earlier article by Neocleous.

Despite the considerable power that social institutions have in shaping our lives, the sociological study of social movements provides evidence of the great potential for people to change these institutions. Each success, no matter how small, changes the field of struggle. This forces authorities to change their strategies for maintaining order, shifting the balance between consent and coercion depending on the situation. This, in turn, leads to the development of new strategies and tactics by existing social movements and the emergence of new movements. Even when social movement organizations do not succeed in achieving their stated goals, they may leave behind cultural resources that can be used by others. Social movements must thus be seen, especially by the people who are active in them, as part of a broad historical process of change. They require simultaneously a utopian vision, by which we mean an ability to see beyond the boundaries defined for us by social institutions, and a systematic analysis of the opportunities for change present in existing institutions.

In Charles Derber's interview with Noam Chomsky this is exactly the path they follow. Chomsky argues that there is strong public support for three progressive issues: climate change, de-activating nuclear weapons arsenals, and infrastructure development. The four keys to success are rational discourse, persistent organizing, a re-vitalized labor union movement, and a direct focus on class issues and not identity politics. Derber and Chomsky strongly disagree with Thomas Frank (What's the Matter with Kansas?) who argues that working-class Americans are too deeply imbued with right-wing ideology to be organized. Derber and Chomsky make the case that millions of Americans are ripe to be organized by the left,

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Chapter 31

The Structuring of Protest

Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward

Common sense and historical experience combine to suggest a simple but compelling view of the roots of power in any society. Crudely but clearly stated, those who control the means of physical coercion, and those who control the means of producing wealth, have power over those who do not. This much is true whether the means of coercion consists in the primitive force of a warrior caste or the technological force of a modern army. And it is true whether the control of production consists in control by priests of the mysteries of the calendar on which agriculture depends, or control by financiers of the large-scale capital on which industrial production depends. Since coercive force can be used to gain control of the means of producing wealth, and since control of wealth can be used to gain coercive force, these two sources of power tend over time to be drawn together within one ruling class.

Common sense and historical experience also combine to suggest that these sources of power are protected and enlarged by the use of that power not only to control the actions of men and women, but also to control their beliefs. What some call superstructure, and what others call culture, includes an elaborate system of beliefs and ritual behaviors which defines for people what is right and what is wrong and why; what is possible and what is impossible; and the behavioral imperatives that follow from these beliefs. Because this superstructure of beliefs and rituals is evolved in the context of unequal power, it is inevitable that beliefs and rituals reinforce inequality, by rendering the powerful divine and the challengers evil. Thus the class struggles that might otherwise be inevitable in sharply unequal societies ordinarily do not seem either possible or right from the perspective of those who live within the structure of belief and ritual fashioned by those societies. People whose only possible recourse in struggle is to defy the beliefs and rituals laid down by their rulers ordinarily do not.

The emergence of a protest movement entails a transformation both of consciousness and of behavior. The change in consciousness has at least three distinct aspects. First, "the system"—or those aspects of the system that people experience and perceive—loses legitimacy. Large numbers of men and women who ordinarily accept the authority of their rulers and legitimacy of institutional arrangements come to believe in some measure that these rulers and these arrangements are unjust and wrong. Second, people who are ordinarily fatalistic, who believe that existing arrangements are inevitable, begin to assert "rights" that imply demands for change. Third, there is a new sense of efficacy; people who ordinarily consider themselves helpless come to believe that they have some capacity to alter their lot.

The change in behavior is equally striking, and usually more easily recognized, at least when it takes the form of mass strikes or marches or riots. Such behavior seems to us to involve two distinguishing elements. First, masses of people become defiant; they violate the traditions and laws to which they ordinarily acquiesce, and they flaunt the authorities to

whom they ordinarily defer. And second, their defiance is acted out collectively, as members of a group, and not as isolated individuals. Strikes and riots are clearly forms of collective action, but even some forms of defiance which appear to be individual acts, such as crime or school truancy or incendiarism, while more ambiguous, may have a collective dimension, for those who engage in these acts may consider themselves to be part of a larger movement. Such apparently atomized acts of defiance can be considered movement events when those involved perceive themselves to be acting as members of a group, and when they share a common set of protest beliefs.

* * * *

Institutional Limits on the Incidence of Mass Insurgency

Aristotle believed that the chief cause of internal warfare was inequality, that the lesser rebel in order to be equal. But human experience has proved him wrong, most of the time. Sharp inequality has been constant, but rebellion infrequent. Aristotle underestimated the controlling force of the social structure on political life. However hard their lot may be, people usually remain acquiescent, conforming to the accustomed patterns of daily life in their community, and believing those patterns to be both inevitable and just. Men and women till the fields each day, or stoke the furnaces, or tend the looms, obeying the rules and rhythms of earning a livelihood; they mate and bear children hopefully, and mutely watch them die; they abide by the laws of church and community and defer to their rulers, striving to earn a little grace and esteem. In other words most of the time people conform to the institutional arrangements which enmesh them, which regulate the rewards and penalties of daily life, and which appear to be the only possible reality.

Those for whom the rewards are most meager, who are the most oppressed by inequality, are also acquiescent. Sometimes they are the most acquiescent, for they have little defense against the penalties that can be imposed for defiance. Moreover, at most times and in most places, and especially in the United States, the poor are led to believe that their destitution is deserved, and that the riches and power that others command are also deserved. In more traditional societies sharp inequalities are thought to be divinely ordained, or to be a part of the natural order of things. In more modern societies, such as the United States, riches and power are ascribed to personal qualities of industry or talent; it follows that those who have little or nothing have only what they deserve. . . .

* * * *

Ordinarily, in short, the lower classes accept their lot, and that acceptance can be taken for granted; it need not be bargained for by their rulers. This capacity of the institutions of a society to enforce political docility is the most obvious way in which protest is socially structured, in the sense that it is structurally precluded most of the time.

Sometimes, however, the poor do become defiant. They challenge traditional authorities, and the rules laid down by those authorities. They demand redress for their grievances. American history is punctuated by such events, from the first uprisings by freeholders, tenants, and slaves in colonial America, to the postrevolutionary debtor rebellions, through the periodic eruptions of strikes and riots by industrial workers, to the ghetto riots of the twentieth century. In each instance, masses of the poor were somehow able, if only briefly, to overcome the shame bred by a culture which blames them for their plight; somehow they were able to break the bonds of conformity enforced by work, by family, by community, by

every strand of institutional life; somehow they were able to overcome the fears induced by police, by militia, by company guards.

When protest does arise, when masses of those who are ordinarily docile become defiant, a major transformation has occurred. . . . [T]he emergence of popular uprisings reflects profound changes in the larger society. . . . [O]nly under exceptional conditions will the lower classes become defiant—and thus, in our terms, *only under exceptional conditions are the lower classes afforded the socially determined opportunity to press for their own interests*.

. . . This argues that it not only requires a major social dislocation before protest can emerge, but that a sequence or combination of dislocations probably must occur before the anger that underlies protest builds to a high pitch, and before that anger can find expression in collective defiance.

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And with that said, the implication for an understanding of the potential for political influence among the poor becomes virtually self-evident: *since periods of profound social dislocations are infrequent, so too are opportunities for protest among the lower classes*.

The Patterning of Insurgency

Just as quiescence is enforced by institutional life, and just as the eruption of discontent is determined by changes in institutional life, the forms of political protest are also determined by the institutional context in which people live and work. . . .

The Electoral System as a Structuring Institution

In the United States the principal structuring institution, at least in the early phases of protest, is the electoral-representative system. The significance of this assertion is not that the electoral system provides an avenue of influence under normal circumstances. To the contrary, . . . it is usually when unrest among the lower classes breaks out of the confines of electoral procedures that the poor may have some influence, for the instability and polarization they then threaten to create by their actions in the factories or in the streets may force some response from electoral leaders. But whether action emerges in the factories or the streets may depend on the course of the early phase of protest at the polls.

Ordinarily defiance is first expressed in the voting booth simply because, whether defiant or not, people have been socialized within a political culture that defines voting as the mechanism through which political change can and should properly occur. The vitality of this political culture, the controlling force of the norms that guide political discontent into electoral channels, is not understood merely by asserting the pervasiveness of liberal political ideology in the United States and the absence of competing ideologies, for that is precisely what has to be explained. Some illumination is provided by certain features of the electoral system itself, by its rituals and celebrations and rewards, for these practices help to ensure the persistence of confidence in electoral procedures. Thus it is significant that the franchise was extended to white working-class men at a very early period in the history of the United States, and that a vigorous system of local government developed. Through these mechanisms, large proportions of the population were embraced by the rituals of electoral campaigns, and shared in the symbolic rewards of the electoral system, while some also shared in the tangible rewards of a relatively freely dispensed government patronage. Beliefs thus nurtured do not erode readily.

Accordingly, one of the first signs of popular discontent in the contemporary United States is usually a sharp shift in traditional voting patterns. In a sense, the electoral system serves to measure and register the extent of the emerging disaffection. Thus, the urban working class reacted to economic catastrophe in the landslide election of 1932 by turning against the Republican Party to which it had given its allegiance more or less since 1896. Similarly, the political impact of the forces of modernization and migration was first evident in the crucial presidential elections of 1956 and 1960. Urban blacks, who had voted Democratic in successively larger proportions since the election of 1936, began to defect to Republican columns or to stay away from the polls.

These early signs of political instability ordinarily prompt efforts by contending political leaders to placate the defecting groups, usually at this stage with conciliatory pronouncements. The more serious the electoral defections, or the keener the competition among political elites, the more likely that such symbolic appeasements will be offered. But if the sources of disturbance and anger are severe—and only if they are severe and persistent—conciliations are likely merely to fuel mass arousal, for in effect they imply that some of the highest leaders of the land identify with the indignation of the lowly masses.

Moreover, just as political leaders play an influential role in stimulating mass arousal, so do they play an important role in shaping the demands of the aroused.[1] What are intended to serve as merely symbolic appeasements may instead provide a focus for the still inchoate anxieties and diffuse anger that drive the masses. Thus early rhetorical pronouncements by liberal political leaders, including presidents of the United States, about the "rights" of workers and the "rights" of blacks not only helped to fuel the discontents of workers and blacks, but helped to concentrate those discontents on demands articulated by leading officials of the nation.

But when people are thus encouraged in spirit without being appeased in fact, their defiance may escape the boundaries of electoral rituals and escape the boundaries established by political norms of the electoral-representative system in general. They may indeed become rebellious, but while their rebellion often appears chaotic from the perspective of conventional American politics, or from the perspective of some organizers, it is not chaotic at all; it is structured political behavior. When people riot in the streets, their behavior is socially patterned, and within those patterns, their actions are to some extent deliberate and purposeful.

Social Location and Forms of Defiance

* * * *

Just as electoral political institutions channel protest into voter activity in the United States, and may even confine it within these spheres if the disturbance is not severe and the electoral system appears responsive, so do other features of institutional life determine the forms that protest takes when it breaks out of the boundaries of electoral politics. Thus, it is no accident that some people strike, others riot, or loot the granaries, or burn the machines, for just as the patterns of daily life ordinarily assure mass quiescence, so do these same patterns influence the form defiance will take when it erupts.

First, people experience deprivation and oppression within a concrete setting, not as the end product of large and abstract processes, and it is the concrete experience that molds their discontent into specific grievances against specific targets. Workers experience the factory, the speeding rhythm of the assembly line, the foreman, the spies and the guards, the owner and the paycheck. They do not experience monopoly capitalism. People on relief experience

the shabby waiting rooms, the overseer or the case-worker, and the dole. They do not experience American social welfare policy. Tenants experience the leaking ceilings and cold radiators, and they recognize the landlord. They do not recognize the banking, real estate, and construction systems. No small wonder, therefore, that when the poor rebel they so often rebel against the overseer of the poor, or the slumlord, or the middling merchant, and not against the banks or the governing elites to whom the overseer, the slumlord, and the merchant also defer. In other words, it is the daily experience of people that shapes their grievances, establishes the measure of their demands, and points out the targets of their anger.

Second, institutional patterns shape mass movements by shaping the collectivity out of which protest can arise. Institutional life aggregates people or disperses them, molds group identities, and draws people into the settings within which collective action can erupt. Thus factory work gathers men and women together, educates them in a common experience, and educates them to the possibilities of cooperation and collective action. Casual laborers or petty entrepreneurs, by contrast, are dispersed by their occupations, and are therefore less likely to perceive their commonalities of position, and less likely to join together in collective action.

Third, and most important, institutional roles determine the strategic opportunities for defiance, for it is typically by rebelling against the rules and authorities associated with their everyday activities that people protest. Thus workers protest by striking. They are able to do so because they are drawn together in the factory setting, and their protests consist mainly in defying the rules and authorities associated with the workplace. The unemployed do not and cannot strike, even when they perceive that those who own the factories and businesses are to blame for their troubles. Instead, they riot in the streets where they are forced to linger, or storm the relief centers, and it is difficult to imagine them doing otherwise.

That they should do otherwise, however, is constantly asserted, and it is in such statements that the influence (as well as the absurdity) of the pluralist view becomes so evident. By denying the constraints which are imposed by institutional location, protest is readily discredited, as when insurgents are denounced for having ignored the true centers of power by attacking the wrong target by the wrong means. Thus welfare administrators admonish recipients for disrupting relief offices and propose instead that they learn how to lobby in the state legislature or Congress. But welfare clients cannot easily go to the state or national capital, and when a few do, they are of course ignored. Sometimes, however, they can disrupt relief offices, and that is harder to ignore.

In the same vein, a favorite criticism of the student peace movement, often made by erstwhile sympathizers, was that it was foolish of the students to protest the Vietnam War by demonstrating at the universities and attacking blameless administrators and faculties. It was obviously not the universities that were waging the war, critics argued, but the military-industrial complex. The students were not so foolish, however. The exigencies of mass action are such that they were constrained to act out their defiance within the universities where they were physically located and could thus act collectively, and where they played a role on which an institution depended, so that their defiance mattered.

Since our examples might suggest otherwise, we should note at this juncture that the tendency to impute freedom of choice in the evolution of political strategies is not peculiar to those who have large stakes in the preservation of some institution, whether welfare administrators or university professors. Nor is the tendency peculiar to those of more conservative political persuasion. Radical organizers make precisely the same assumption when they call upon the working class to organize in one way or another and to pursue one political strategy or another, even in the face of overwhelming evidence that social conditions preclude the exercise of such options. Opportunities for defiance are not created by analyses of

power structures. If there is a genius in organizing, it is the capacity to sense what it is possible for people to do under given conditions, and to then help them do it. In point of fact, however, most organizing ventures ask that people do what they cannot do, and the result is failure.

> *It is our second general point, then, that the opportunities for defiance are structured by features of institutional life.*[2] *Simply put, people cannot defy institutions to which they have no access, and to which they make no contribution.*

The Limited Impact of Mass Defiance

If mass defiance is neither freely available nor the forms it takes freely determined, it must also be said that it is generally of limited political impact. Still, some forms of protest appear to have more impact than others, thus posing an analytical question of considerable importance.

It is our judgment that *the most useful way to think about the effectiveness of protest is to examine the disruptive effects on institutions of different forms of mass defiance, and then to examine the political reverberations of those disruptions*. The impact of mass defiance is, in other words, not so much directly as indirectly felt. Protest is more likely to have a seriously disruptive impact when the protestors play a central role in an institution, and it is more likely to evoke wider political reverberations when powerful groups have large stakes in the disrupted institution. . . .

The Limits of Institutional Disruption

To refer to an institutional disruption is simply to note the obvious fact that institutional life depends upon conformity with established roles and compliance with established rules. Defiance may thus obstruct the normal operations of institutions. Factories are shut down when workers walk out or sit down; welfare bureaucracies are thrown into chaos when crowds demand relief; landlords may be bankrupted when tenants refuse to pay rent. In each of these cases, *people cease to conform to accustomed institutional roles; they withhold their accustomed cooperation, and by doing so, cause institutional disruptions*.

By our definition, disruption is simply the application of a negative sanction, the withdrawal of a crucial contribution on which others depend, and it is therefore a natural resource for exerting power over others. This form of power is, in fact, regularly employed by individuals and groups linked together in many kinds of cooperative interaction, and particularly by producer groups. Farmers, for example, keep their products off the market in order to force up the price offered by buyers; doctors refuse to provide treatment unless their price is met; oil companies withhold supplies until price concessions are made.

But the amount of leverage that a group gains by applying such negative sanctions is widely variable. Influence depends, first of all, on whether or not the contribution withheld is crucial to others; second, on whether or not those who have been affected by the disruption have resources to be conceded; and third, on whether the obstructionist group can protect itself adequately from reprisals. Once these criteria are stated, it becomes evident that the poor are usually in the least strategic position to benefit from defiance.

Thus, in comparison with most producer groups, the lower classes are often in weak institutional locations to use disruption as a tactic for influence. Many among the lower class are in locations that make their cooperation less than crucial to the operation of major institutions. Those who work in economically marginal enterprises, or who perform marginally

necessary functions in major enterprises, or those who are unemployed, do not perform roles on which major institutions depend. Indeed, some of the poor are sometimes so isolated from significant institutional participation that the only "contribution" they can withhold is that of quiescence in civil life: they can riot.

Moreover, those who manage the institutions in which many of the lower classes find themselves often have little to concede to disruptors. When lower-class groups do play an important role in an institution, as they do in sweatshops or in slum tenements, these institutions—operated as they often are by marginal entrepreneurs—may be incapable of yielding very much in response to disruptive pressure.

Finally, lower-class groups have little ability to protect themselves against reprisals that can be employed by institutional managers. The poor do not have to be historians of the occasions when protestors have been jailed or shot down to understand this point. The lesson of their vulnerability is engraved in everyday life; it is evident in every police beating, in every eviction, in every lost job, in every relief termination. The very labels used to describe defiance by the lower classes—the pejorative labels of illegality and violence—testify to this vulnerability and serve to justify severe reprisals when they are imposed. By taking such labels for granted, we fail to recognize what these events really represent: a structure of political coercion inherent in the everyday life of the lower classes.

We can now comment on the association of disruption with spontaneity, perhaps another relic of traditional ways of thinking about lower-class uprisings, although here the issue is a little more complicated. Disruption itself is not necessarily spontaneous, but lower-class disruptions often are, in the sense that they are not planned and executed by formal organizations. In part, this testifies to the paucity of stable organizational resources among the poor, as well as to the cautious and moderate character of such organizations as are able to survive. But even if formal organizations existed, and even if they were not committed by the exigencies of their own survival to more cautious tactics, the circumstance that lead to mass defiance by the lower class are extremely difficult to predict; and once defiance erupts, its direction is difficult for leaders to control. . . .

Still, if the lower classes do not ordinarily have great disruptive power, and if the use of even that kind of power is not planned, it is the only power they do have. Their use of that power, the weighing of gains and risks, is not calculated in board rooms; it wells up out of the terrible travails that people experience at times of rupture and stress. And at such times, disruptions by the poor may have reverberations that go beyond the institutions in which the disruption is acted out.

The Limits of Political Disruption

It is not the impact of disruptions on particular institutions that finally tests the power of the poor; it is the political impact of these disruptions. At this level, however, a new set of structuring mechanisms intervenes, for the political impact of institutional disruptions is mediated by the electoral-representative system.

Responses to disruption vary depending on electoral conditions. Ordinarily, during periods of stability, governmental leaders have three rather obvious options when an institutional disruption occurs. They may ignore it; they may employ punitive measures against the disruptors; or they may attempt to conciliate them. If the disruptive group has little political leverage in its own right, as is true of lower-class groups, it will either be ignored or repressed. It is more likely to be ignored when the disrupted institution is not central to the society as a whole, or to other more important groups. Thus if men and women run amok, disrupting the fabric of their own communities, as in the immigrant slums of the nineteenth century,

the spectacle may be frightening, but it can be contained within the slums; it will not necessarily have much impact on the society as a whole, or on the well-being of other important groups. Similarly, when impoverished mobs demand relief, they may cause havoc in the relief offices, but chaotic relief offices are not a large problem for the society as a whole, or for important groups. Repression is more likely to be employed when central institutions are affected, as when railroad workers struck and rioted in the late nineteenth century, or when the police struck in Boston after the First World War. Either way, to be ignored or punished is what the poor ordinarily expect from government, because these are the responses they ordinarily evoke.

But protest movements do not arise during ordinary periods; they arise when large-scale changes undermine political stability. It is this context, as we said earlier, that gives the poor hope and makes insurgency possible in the first place. It is this context that also makes political leaders somewhat vulnerable to protests by the poor.

At times of rapid economic and social change, political leaders are far less free either to ignore disturbances or to employ punitive measures. At such times, the relationship of political leaders to their constituents is likely to become uncertain. This unsettled state of political affairs makes the regime far more sensitive to disturbances, for it is not only more likely that previously uninvolved groups will be activated—the scope of conflict will be widened—but that the scope of conflict will be widened at a time when political alignments have already become unpredictable.

When a political leadership becomes unsure of its support, even disturbances that are isolated within peripheral institutions cannot be so safely ignored, for the mere appearance of trouble and disorder is more threatening when political alignments are unstable. And when the disrupted institutions are central to economic production or to the stability of social life, it becomes imperative that normal operations be restored if the regime is to maintain support among its constituents. Thus when industrial workers joined in massive strikes during the 1930s, they threatened the entire economy of the nation and, given the electoral instability of the times, threatened the future of the nation's political leadership. Under these circumstances, government could hardly ignore the disturbances.

Yet neither could the government run the risks entailed by using massive force to subdue the strikers in the 1930s. It could not, in other words, simply avail itself to the option of repression. For one thing the striking workers, like the civil rights demonstrators in the 1960s, had aroused strong sympathy among groups that were crucial supporters of the regime. For another, unless insurgent groups are virtually of outcast status, permitting leaders of the regime to mobilize popular hatred against them, politically unstable conditions make the use of force risky, since the reactions of other aroused groups cannot be safely predicted. When government is unable to ignore the insurgents, and is unwilling to risk the uncertain repercussions of the use of force, it will make efforts to conciliate and disarm the protestors.

These placating efforts will usually take several forms. First and most obviously, political leaders will offer concessions, or press elites in the private sector to offer concessions, to remedy some of the immediate grievances, both symbolic and tangible, of the disruptive group. Thus mobs of unemployed workers were granted relief in the 1930s; striking industrial workers won higher pay and shorter hours; and angry civil rights demonstrators were granted the right to desegregated public accommodations in the 1960s.

Whether one takes such measures as evidence of the capacity of American political institutions for reform, or brushes them aside as mere tokenism, such concessions were not offered readily by government leaders. In each case, and in some cases more than in others, reform required a break with an established pattern of government accommodation to private elites. Thus the New Deal's liberal relief policy was maintained despite widespread opposition from

the business community. Striking workers in the mid-1930s succeeded in obtaining wage concessions from private industry only because state and national political leaders abandoned the age-old policy of using the coercive power of the state to curb strikers. The granting of desegregated public accommodations required that national Democratic leaders turn against their traditional allies among southern plantation elites. In such instances concessions were won by the protestors only when political leaders were finally forced, out of concern for their own survival, to act in ways which aroused the fierce opposition of economic elites. In short, under conditions of severe electoral instability, the alliance of public and private power is sometimes weakened, if only briefly, and at these moments a defiant poor may make gains.

Second, political leaders or elites allied with them, will try to quiet disturbances not only by dealing with immediate grievances, but by making efforts to channel the energies and angers of the protestors into more legitimate and less disruptive forms of political behavior, in part by offering incentives to movement leaders or, in other words, by coopting them. Thus relief demonstrators in both the 1930s and the 1960s were encouraged to learn to use administrative grievance procedures as an alternative to "merely" disrupting relief offices, while their leaders were offered positions as advisors to relief administrators. In the 1960s civil rights organizers left the streets to take jobs in the Great Society programs; and as rioting spread in the northern cities, street leaders in the ghettos were encouraged to join in "dialogues" with municipal officials, and some were offered positions in municipal agencies.

Third, the measures promulgated by government at times of disturbance may be designed not to conciliate the protestors, but to undermine whatever sympathy the protesting group has been able to command from a wider public. Usually this is achieved through new programs that appear to meet the moral demands of the movement, and thus rob it of support without actually yielding much by way of tangible gains. A striking example was the passage of the pension provisions of the Social Security Act. The organized aged in the Townsend Movement were demanding pensions of $200 a month, with no strings attached, and they had managed to induce some 25 million people to sign supporting petitions. As it turned out, the Social Security Act, while it provided a measure of security for many of the future aged, did nothing for the members of the Townsend Movement, none of whom would be covered by a work-related insurance scheme since they were no longer working, and most of whom would in any case be dead when the payments were to begin some seven years later. But the pension provisions of the Social Security Act answered the *moral* claims of the movement. In principle, government had acted to protect America's aged, thus severing any identification between those who would be old in the future and those who were already old. The Social Security Act effectively dampened public support for the Townsend Plan while yielding the old people nothing. Other examples of responses which undermine public support abound. The widely heralded federal programs for the ghettos in the 1960s were neither designed nor funded in a way that made it possible for them to have substantial impact on poverty or on the traumas of ghetto life. But the publicity attached to the programs—the din and blare about a "war on poverty" and the development of "model cities"—did much to appease the liberal sympathizers with urban blacks.

Finally, these apparently conciliatory measures make it possible for government to safely employ repressive measures as well. Typically, leaders and groups who are more disruptive, or who spurn the concessions offered, are singled out for arbitrary police action or for more formal legal harassment through congressional investigations or through the courts. In the context of much-publicized efforts by government to ease the grievances of disaffected groups, coercive measures of this kind are not likely to arouse indignation among

sympathetic publics. Indeed, this dual strategy is useful in another way, for it serves to cast an aura of balance and judiciousness over government action.

The main point, however, is simply that *the political impact of institutional disruptions depends upon electoral conditions*. Even serious disruptions, such as industrial strikes, will force concessions only when the calculus of electoral instability favors the protestors. And even then, when the protestors succeed in forcing government to respond, they do not dictate the content of those responses. As to the variety of specific circumstances which determine how much the protestors will gain and how much they will lose, we still have a great deal to learn.

The Demise of Protest

It is not surprising that, taken together, these efforts to conciliate and disarm usually lead to the demise of the protest movement, partly by transforming the movement itself, and partly by transforming the political climate which nourishes protest. With these changes, the array of institutional controls which ordinarily restrain protest is restored, and political influence is once more denied to the lower class.

We said that one form of government response was to make concessions to the protestors, yielding them something of what they demanded, either symbolic or material. But the mere granting of such concessions is probably not very important in accounting for the demise of a movement. For one thing, whatever is yielded is usually modest if not meager; for another, even modest-concessions demonstrate that protest "works," a circumstance that might as easily be expected to fuel a movement as to pacify it.

But concessions are rarely unencumbered. If they are given at all, they are usually part and parcel of measures to reintegrate the movement into normal political channels and to absorb its leaders into stable institutional roles. Thus the right of industrial workers to unionize, won in response to massive and disruptive strikes in the 1930s, meant that workers were encouraged to use newly established grievance procedures in place of the sitdown or the wildcat strike; and the new union leaders, now absorbed in relations with factory management and in the councils of the Democratic Party, become the ideological proponents and organizational leaders of this strategy of normalcy and moderation. Similarly, when blacks won the vote in the South and a share of patronage in the municipalities of the North in response to the disturbances of the 1960s, black leaders were absorbed into electoral and bureaucratic politics and became the ideological proponents of the shift "from protest to politics" (Rustin).

This feature of government action deserves some explanation because the main reintegrative measures—the right to organize, the right to vote, black representation in city government—were also responses to specific demands made by the protestors themselves. To all appearances, government simply acted to redress felt grievances. But the process was by no means as straightforward as that. As we suggested earlier, the movements had arisen through interaction with elites, and had been led to make the demands they made in response to early encouragement by political leaders. Nor was it fortuitous that political leaders came to proclaim as just such causes as the right to organize or the right to vote or the right to "citizen participation." In each case, elites responded to discontent by proposing reforms with which they had experience, and which consisted mainly of extending established procedures to new groups or to new institutional arenas. Collective bargaining was not invented in the 1930s, nor the franchise in the 1960s. Driven by turmoil, political leaders proposed reforms that were in a sense prefigured by institutional arrangements that already existed, that were drawn from a repertoire provided by existing traditions. And an aroused people responded by demanding simply what political

leaders had said they should have. If through some accident of history they had done otherwise, if industrial workers had demanded public ownership of factories, they would probably have still gotten unionism, if they got anything at all; and if impoverished southern blacks had demanded land reform, they would probably have still gotten the vote.

At the same time that government makes efforts to reintegrate disaffected groups, and to guide them into less politically disturbing forms of behavior, it also moves to isolate them from potential supporters and, by doing so, diminishes the morale of the movement. Finally, while the movement is eroding under these influences, its leaders attracted by new opportunities, its followers conciliated, confused, or discouraged, the show of repressive force against recalcitrant elements demolishes the few who are left.

However, the more far-reaching changes do not occur within the movement, but in the political context which nourished the movement in the first place. The agitated and defiant people who compose the movement are but a small proportion of the discontented population on which it draws. Presumably if some leaders were coopted, new leaders would arise; if some participants were appeased or discouraged, others would take their place. But this does not happen, because government's responses not only destroy the movement, they also transform the political climate which makes protest possible. The concessions to the protestors, the efforts to "bring them into the system," and in particular the measures aimed at potential supporters, all work to create a powerful image of a benevolent and responsive government that answers grievances and solves problems. As a result, whatever support might have existed among the larger population dwindles. Moreover, the display of government benevolence stimulates antagonist groups, and triggers the antagonistic sentiments of more neutral sectors. The "tide of public opinion" begins to turn—against labor in the late 1930s, against blacks in the late 1960s. And as it does, the definitions put forward by political leaders also change, particularly when prodded by contenders for political office who sense the shift in popular mood, and the weaknesses it reveals in an incumbent's support. Thus in the late 1960s, Republican leaders took advantage of white resentment against blacks to attract Democratic voters, raising cries of "law and order" and "workfare not welfare"—the code words for racial antagonism. Such a change is ominous. Where once the powerful voices of the land enunciated a rhetoric that gave courage to the poor, now they enunciate a rhetoric that erases hope, and implants fear. The point should be evident that as these various circumstances combine defiance is no longer possible.

The Residue of Reform

When protest subsides, concessions may be withdrawn. Thus when the unemployed become docile, the relief rolls are cut even though many are still unemployed; when the ghetto becomes quiescent, evictions are resumed. The reason is simple enough. Since the poor no longer pose the threat of disruption, they no longer exert leverage on political leaders; there is no need for conciliation. This is particularly the case in a climate of growing political hostility, for the concessions granted are likely to become the focus of resentment by other groups.

But some concessions are not withdrawn. As the tide of turbulence recedes, major institutional changes sometimes remain. Thus the right of workers to join unions was not rescinded when turmoil subsided (although some of the rights ceded to unions were withdrawn). And it is not likely that the franchise granted to blacks in the South will be taken back (although just that happened in the post-Reconstruction period). Why, then, are some concessions withdrawn while others become permanent institutional reforms?

The answer, perhaps, is that while some of the reforms granted during periods of turmoil are costly or repugnant to various groups in the society, and are therefore suffered only under duress, other innovations turn out to be compatible (or at least not incompatible) with the interests of more powerful groups, most importantly with the interests of dominant economic groups. Such an assertion has the aura of a conspiracy theory, but in fact the process is not conspiratorial at all. Major industrialists had resisted unionization, but once forced to concede it as the price of industrial peace, they gradually discovered that labor unions constituted a useful mechanism to regulate the labor force. The problem of disciplining industrial labor had been developing over the course of a century. The depression produced the political turmoil through which a solution was forged. Nor was the solution simply snatched from the air. As noted earlier, collective bargaining was a tried and tested method of dealing with labor disturbances. The tumult of the 1930s made the use of this method imperative; once implemented, the reforms were institutionalized because they continued to prove useful.

Similarly, southern economic elites had no interest in ceding southern blacks the franchise. But their stakes in disfranchising blacks had diminished. The old plantation economy was losing ground to new industrial enterprises; plantation-based elites were losing ground to economic dominants based in industry. The feudal political arrangements on which a plantation economy had relied were no longer of central importance, and certainly they were not of central importance to the new economic elites. Black uprisings, by forcing the extension of the franchise and the modernization of southern politics, thus helped seal a fissure in the institutional fabric of American society, a fissure resulting from the growing inconsistency between the economic and political institutions of the South.

What these examples suggest is that *protesters win, if they win at all, what historical circumstances have already made ready to be conceded*. Still, as Alan Wolfe has said, governments do no change magically through some "historical radical transformation," but only through the actual struggles of the time (154). When people are finally roused to protest against great odds, they take the only options available to them within the limits imposed by their social circumstances. . . .

A Note on the Role of Protest Leadership

The main point of this chapter is that both the limitations and opportunities for mass protest are shaped by social conditions. The implications for the role of leadership in protest movements can be briefly summarized.

Protest wells up in response to momentous changes in the institutional order. It is not created by organizers and leaders.

Once protest erupts, the specific forms it takes are largely determined by features of social structure. Organizers and leaders who contrive strategies that ignore the social location of the people they seek to mobilize can only fail.

Elites respond to the institutional disruptions that protest causes, as well as to other powerful institutional imperatives. Elite responses are not significantly shaped by the demands of leaders and organizers. Nor are elite responses significantly shaped by formally structured organizations of the poor. Whatever influence lower-class groups occasionally exert in American politics does not result from organization, but from mass protest and the disruptive consequences of protest.

Finally, protest in the United States has been episodic and transient, for as it gains momentum, so too do various forms of institutional accommodation and coercion that have the effect of restoring quiescence. Organizers and leaders cannot prevent the ebbing of protest,

nor the erosion of whatever influence protest yielded the lower class. They can only try to win whatever can be won while it can be won.

In these major ways protest movements are shaped by institutional conditions, and not by the purposive efforts of leaders and organizers. The limitations are large and unyielding. Yet within the boundaries created by these limitations, some latitude for purposive effort remains. Organizers and leaders choose to do one thing, or they choose to do another, and what they choose to do affects to some degree the course of the protest movement. If the area of latitude is less than leaders and organizers would prefer, it is also not enlarged when they proceed as if institutional limitations did not in fact exist by undertaking strategies which fly in the face of these constraints. The wiser course is to understand these limitations, and to exploit whatever latitude remains to enlarge the potential influence of the lower class. And if our conclusions are correct, what this means is that strategies must be pursued that escalate the momentum and impact of disruptive protest at each stage in its emergence and evolution.

Notes

1. Edelman ascribes the influence of public officials as "powerful shapers of perceptions" to their virtual monopoly on certain kinds of information, to the legitimacy of the regime with which they are identified, and to the intense identification of people with the state (101–102).
2. This is perhaps what C. L. R. James means when he writes: "Workers are at their very best in collective action in the circumstances of their daily activity or crises arising from it" (95). Richard Flacks has also made a related argument regarding the importance of what he calls "everyday life" in shaping popular movements.

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Chapter 32

Fascism

Revolution Against the Revolution

Mark Neocleous

. . . Fascism styles itself as anti-Marxist and anti-Bolshevik, yet insists, for a variety of reasons, that it contains a commitment to socialism. The nature of "fascist socialism" or "national socialism" therefore needs to be addressed. To do this I shall be rather old fashioned, which these days can only mean one thing: I shall be discussing capitalism and revolution. I shall argue that fascism appropriates socialist language, slogans and, occasionally, arguments, but by incorporating them into a broader ideological framework with nationalist, elitist and conservative intentions it dissolves socialism's key premises into a politics of reaction and, building on the work of the conservative revolutionaries, reveals itself as a counter-revolutionary phenomenon in defence of capitalism.

The argument is developed at a critical distance from the frequent claim that fascism and Marxism share common ground. A. James Gregor's account of the "intellectual origins of fascism" rests on the belief that fascism is a *variant* of Marxism and that both are illustrative of the "fascist persuasion" in radical politics; a similar claim is made by Noël O'Sullivan. Even Zeev Sternhell, in his far more subtle work on the "birth of fascist ideology," claims that fascism is a *revision* of Marxism.[1] . . . But there are a number of reasons why such an approach should be rejected. First, as soon as one incorporates German fascism into this picture it becomes difficult to sustain the exclusive focus on the revision of Marxism, given the widespread violent opposition to Marxism within the German context. Second, as a movement fascism defines itself categorically as anti-communist and anti-Marxist. Third, the term "revision" has an ambiguity which obscures more than it reveals. The entire history of Marxism since Marx's death can in some ways be read as a series of "revisions" of Marx in the light of theoretical critique and historical change. Can one distinguish between revisions of Marxism that remain Marxist and revisions which leave the Marxist fold? If terms such as "Marxism" and "fascism" (and, for that matter, liberalism, conservatism, and so on) are to retain any meaning the answer must be in the affirmative. That Marxism and fascism may share some features—an anti-parliamentarianism and commitment to radical change, for example—is less significant than the features which set them apart and place them on opposite sides of historical struggle. At the heart of this opposition lies the issue of class.

A Mongrel of Lies: National Socialism

Despite the fact that only the Nazis included in the title of their party the designation "National Socialist," fascism generally presents itself as socialist. . . . [F]ascism has the same aim as socialism and communism—the representation of the people—yet unlike communism it does not intend to abolish property. Instead property is to be utilized in a national framework which will harness all social forces—especially those on opposite sides of the class divide—into a national synthesis providing the basis for social justice. In this "social

nationalism" or "national socialism," in which "nationalism + socialism = fascism" the state is to belong to all classes and will unite the nation with socialism.[2] For Hitler, the chief crime of Marxism is its internationalism. The way to avoid Marxists using the working class to destroy the nation is to integrate the class into the nation through the nationalization of the masses. The national socialist state will thus have no classes since classes will be united into a common framework of national unity. National prosperity will be achieved through people being bound together by a common pride and joy.[3]

What the shift to nationalism does more than anything else is to obliterate the class struggle in ideological terms. Instead of the end of class struggle through the victory of the working class and the production of a genuinely classless society, fascism ends class struggle in *this* society, that is, in class society, by dissolving the question of class *per se*. In other words, the shift in the concept of the oppressed group enables fascism to "resolve" the question of class by assuming the classlessness of class society. As Marcuse puts it:

> The whole that it [totalitarian universalism] presents is not the unification achieved by the domination of *one* class within the framework of class society, but rather a unity that combines *all* classes, that is supposed to overcome the reality of class struggle and thus of classes themselves. . . . A classless society, in other words, is the goal, but a classless society on the basis of and within the framework of—the existing class society.

The purpose of this is the prevention of communism through a socialism for the nation. In practice, this is to take the form of nationalization, the direct opposite of socialization.[4] The fascist "resolution" of the problem of class is thus a mystification; it deals with class on an ideological rather than material level. In this sense fascism reveals itself as ideology: since the fascist considers conceptions, thoughts, ideas—all the products of consciousness—as the real human chains they need fight only against these illusions of consciousness. This demand to change consciousness amounts to a demand to interpret reality in another way, that is, to recognize it by means of another interpretation.[5]

The nation is thus a concept for a new interpretation of reality, a class-ridden reality reinterpreted as classless unity. This is true of all nationalism. In fascism, however, the same is true of other key concepts such as race and state. In the case of fascist racism, for example, it is by positing fundamental differences between races and then arranging them hierarchically that the working class can be (re)presented as part of a higher race. By positing racial struggle as the driving force of history, and by pointing to the aristocratic principle in nature, the working class can be conceptualized as part of this aristocracy and part of the driving force of history. For Hitler, it is

> because of the Communists, if for no other reason, that Germany is no longer able to fight beyond its borders . . . For the nation is paralysed by class divisions. My aim is to lead the many millions of workers back to the idea of the *Volk*. That will only happen when they sincerely believe in the ideal.[6]

The message to the worker then, is: why identify with an oppressed class when you can identify with the (racial) aristocracy? Racism is thus a substitute for the class struggle, the racial other being the new enemy for the newly unified people's community. By subsuming class under a racial form the question of class struggle and the possibility of communism are obliterated. Satisfied with his own blood, the worker gives up the struggle for greater social riches.[7] The whole purpose behind *völkisch* thought is that it presents a mechanism for not only *incorporating* the working class but also *subduing* it. The working class is dangerous

because, as a product of the rise of capitalism, this class more than any other embodies modern rootlessness and restlessness; as such the workers threaten the social order. If this class is given a standing in the *Volk,* the worker loses his status as an alienated proletarian and recaptures the unity of the past by being part of a new harmonious social totality; this would simultaneously be an end to social antagonism.[8] Incorporation into the *Volk* can do this because the *Volk* is the universal and spiritual unity of the German people.

In other forms of fascism the idea of the corporate state plays an almost identical role. In declaring it the *people's* state, fascism presents the state as above classes, that is, no longer under the control of one class. But it simultaneously declares that there can be nothing outside the state; that is, nothing opposed to the state. Fascism is *opposed* to socialism, claim Mussolini and Gentile, because socialism "confines the movement of history within the class struggle and ignores the unity of classes established in one economic and morality in the State." Fascism recognizes that divergent and opposed interests have existed, but "wishes to bring them under the control of the State and give them a purpose within the corporate system of interests reconciled within the unity of the State." And yet fascism also *assists* the cause of socialism by stopping it drifting down the path of communism and focusing on class struggle.[9] . . .

In its focus on class Marxism conceptualizes society as fragmented and subject to internal struggle. By thinking of society as constituted as one state and one race the illusion of unity is created. Through either *Volk* or state, fascism presents its own version of totality, rooted in the nation-state. Within this totality all forms of particularity are overcome—the atomization of individuals along with separation of classes. Fascism "liberates" the working class by identifying it as part of the universal state or transcendent *Volk*. As such the place of the working class in history is guaranteed, but guaranteed as part of another totality; there is no need for it to struggle as a class *for itself*. To achieve this "liberation" all forms of fascism present themselves as a form of socialism; the socialist image, however, is always undermined by the nature of the racial or statist totality being offered. For at the heart of fascism is not the material emancipation of the working class but the taming of the masses.[10]

Fascism accepts one of Marx's insights into the nature of capitalism: by being the class with a material investment in the overthrow of capitalism, the working class constitutes *the* revolutionary threat to capitalism. Fascism mobilizes this revolutionary energy while simultaneously taming the force behind it. As Walter Benjamin puts it:

> Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property.[11]

. . . [D]espite its self-designation as socialist and its appropriation of some of the language, slogans and liturgy of the left, fascism established itself historically as a defence of capitalism and thus a *reaction* against working-class revolutionary potential. This will show that the film-maker Sergei Eisenstein's description of "national socialism" as a "mongrel of lies" is an apt description of all fascist "socialism."[12]

Fascism sits comfortably in the tradition of reactionary thought which identifies money and finance capital rather than capitalist commodity production as the "enemy." The goal in this tradition is not a classless society and the abolition of exploitation but a "people's community" in which the excesses of the money-based modern society are curbed. Fascist attacks on "capital" are always attacks on finance or banking capital rather than capitalist production. Despite operating under the label "socialist," such attacks are always the

hallmark of pseudo-socialist movements, that is, movements which steer clear of tackling the foundations of capitalist society. (It is precisely this kind of socialism which Marx and Engels attack in *The Communist Manifesto*.) Those who attack finance and banking capital play into the hands of industrial capital. Far from being anti-capitalist, fascism's attack on finance, banking and money capital constitutes a capitulation to fascist capitalist production.[13] Admittedly, distinguishing between "creative" and "parasitic" capital appeals to workers—by creating a mystique of socialist intentions—but, crucially, in its attack on "parasitical" banking or finance capital this distinction also appeals to capitalists. Thus, far from being established in opposition to private property, fascism establishes itself as private property's saviour. Mussolini made the point that as far as economics went he was a Manchester liberal, Hitler never tired of stating that one of the symptoms of decay was the slow disappearance of the right of private property, and the policy of the Parti Populaire Française was for profit to remain the motor of production, even in "fascist socialism."

Historically this meant that fascism faced the problem of defending private property while retaining a "socialist" façade and mobilizing the masses behind it. The practical outcome of this was to defend private property against the working class by either eliminating workers' organizations or turning them into instruments for the furtherance of national unity. In both Italy and Germany the result was the institutional emasculation of the working-class movement. . . .

The corporate state in Italy provided the foundation for the incorporation of capital and labour. Intended as a third way between liberalism and communism, Italian corporatism sought to unify the nation by invoking the image of unity gleaned from medieval corporations. Instead of workers and capitalists on opposite sides of the class divide, all were to be thought of as "producers" contributing to the success of the nation.[14] For this reason organizations with only workers' interests were replaced by those obeying the demand for fascist national unity. The socialist General Confederation of Labour was abolished, to be replaced by the Fascist Labour Confederation, given an extra stamp of approval with the Vidoni Pact of October 1925 in which the Confederation and the industrialists' Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana (CGII) officially recognized each other as representatives of labour and capital, respectively. . . .

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. . . But while organized capital continued to be represented by its own spokesmen in the CGII, labour found itself "represented" by fascist party bureaucrats, as formalized by the Vidoni agreement (and usefully assisted by the fact that the original leaders and representatives of labour were either in prison or underground). The juridicial form appeared to overcome the traditional confrontation between capital and labour in the formerly "private" sphere, but whereas capital still had a great deal of autonomy and freedom, labour was a subjugated force. The CGII was "nominally subject to the same government controls that applied to other syndicated associations but, unlike them, it was strong enough to resist the demands of government officials and Fascist radicals."[15] Organized industry was *in* the state but not *of* the state; organized labour, on the other hand, was "free" only to the extent that it was *of* the state. A corporate system forms a mystified veil behind which the process of capital accumulation continues unhindered. By incorporating the working class, fascism nullifies the potential political action of that class and, in turn, facilitates the extraction of surplus value.

Two features of the Nazis' anti-capitalist rhetoric are important. First, the Nazi attack on unproductive or finance capital was equally an attack on Jewish capital. And, second, the

Nazis also consistently attacked communism, Marxism, and demands for workers' autonomy and the heightening of the class struggle. These two features were combined in Nazi ideology through the insistence that there existed a Jewish–Bolshevik world conspiracy which was simultaneously a mechanism for the domination of finance capitalism. The Nazis presented themselves as the saviours of socialism through their fight against the Jewish–Bolshevik domination. Goebbels was to declare that "socialism can be achieved only in opposition to the Jews, and it is because we want socialism that we are anti-Semitic," and in *Mein Kampf* Hitler openly professed that the Jew, like the Marxist, encourages contempt for the worker and seeks to shatter the national economy.[16] . . .

The Nazis began by encouraging the trade unions to dissolve their links with the Social Democratic Party, winning the unions over by declaring 1 May a national holiday—a "Day of National Labour." In front of some 1 million people, in a celebration of the 'communal workers' state' and in honour of the "productive workers of all classes," Hitler spoke out against the Marxist misunderstanding of manual labour and its presentation of society as torn apart by social class conflict. Like the Jew, the Marxist is said to denigrate manual labour. The Nazis, in contrast, would praise the work and industry of the people and end the isolation of classes and ranks. The following day, independent trade unionism was crushed. . . .

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. . . Following Hitler's thoughts on trade unions in *Mein Kampf,* where he had argued that the problem was the *Marxist* use of trade unions to foment class divisions and thus undermine national unity rather than trade unions themselves, the Nazi regime slashed trade unions thought to be under the control of communists or containing workers who were communist sympathizers; other unions continued to exist after 1933.[17]

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At the level of the firm one of the earliest pieces of legislation seeking a solution to the "problem" of the working class was the Law on the Organization of National Labour (*Arbeitsordnungsgesetz,* or AOG). All institutions previously concerned with labour relations—from mass organizations to arbitration authorities—were to be replaced by the "factory community" (*Betriebsgemeinschaft*) which, in turn, was to be the "cell" of the national community (*Volksgemeinschaft*), a model of society which Hitler described as a "process of coming together" of the "artificial classes" in the nation. The employer as head of the workforce was to be the mirror image of a *Führer*; workers, to be known as his "followers," were to swear "fealty and obedience" to him, while he was to be concerned with the welfare of his workers. This would help develop the workers' inner commitment to the firm, loyalty to the leader, integration in the factory community and thus into the national community. Although the Trustees of Labour (from May 1933) stood above the "community of the firm" to protect the interests of the state, such protection meant as little interference as possible as the responsibility for day-to-day problems was to remain with the cells of the social organism. A new system of "social honour courts" was introduced in which "offences against social honour" would be punished. Such offences included an employer overexploiting his workforce and a worker threatening the industrial peace.[18] The effects of these changes are obvious: emasculate the working-class movement by obliterating its institutional basis while simultaneously increasing the authority and power of the factory "leaders" to dominate the workforce.

This domination operated alongside both the more overt repression of the workers and their representatives—the presence of the Gestapo at strikes and, from 1938, its terroristic

surveillance over workers, including the use of miniature concentration camps attached to major industrial firms (of which there were 165 up to the middle of the war)—and the appropriation of the language and iconography of socialism. Not content with crushing the working-class movement, torturing and killing socialists, fascism also steals the jewellery from the corpse: the colour red, the street, the flag, May Day, socialist film-making, all adopted for the ideology of the nation and state power rather than world revolution.[19]

The different practices of the Italian and German fascist regimes are, on the one hand, a reflection of their very different ideological mechanisms for the subsumption of class struggle: in the Italian case the incorporation of the working class through a juridicial and statist corporate form, in the German case through the organization of the factory as a community, in turn being the cell of the national community. . . .

. . . [T]hese divergent ideological mechanisms possess an underlying unity of a twofold kind. First, the grounds for the taming of the working class were the presupposition of the necessity for national unity over class conflict. The different means for achieving this—incorporation or obliteration through organization—rested nonetheless on the unity of the nation and authoritarian state power. What fascism understands by "unity," then, is a nation-state in which oppressing and oppressed classes are forced together under a structure of domination.[20] "Unity" here refers less to harmony than to class and state domination, with all forms of resistance and opposition effectively crushed. Second, these divergent mechanisms had a common core—a return to a mythic past, in which such unity was present. Italian corporations were an attempt to invoke the unity achieved by the medieval corporations, a revival of medieval form stuffed full of modern content (capitalism), and the organic form for factory communities in Germany was an attempt to redeem the lost unity of the medieval world. Both were reactions to modernity and its core political components of Marxism and liberalism, with their insistence that bourgeois society is divided on class lines or is merely a collection of atomized individuals. . . .

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To the extent that fascism facilitates capital accumulation and crushes workers' organizations it reveals itself, regardless of its revolutionary rhetoric, as an essentially conservative political phenomenon in defence of capitalism, a political attempt to revive flagging capitalist economies by overcoming the political weaknesses of liberal democratic regimes. Fascism thus reveals the truth of capitalism. . . . Industrial capital can come to terms with any political regime so long as that regime does not actually expropriate it, and will willingly and happily come to terms with any regime which solves economic depression, ends political chaos, destroys the revolutionary communist and socialist movement, eliminates workers' institutions, and commits itself to industrial (capitalist) modernization. Attempts to describe fascism under categories such as totalitarianism, state capitalism and bureaucratic collectivism fail to address this; indeed, they mask it over. Horkheimer's comment, that whoever is not willing to talk about capitalism should also keep quiet about fascism, is thus well made, despite arguments to the contrary made by historians of the opposite political persuasion.[21] But if fascism reveals the truth of capitalism, its defence of capitalism also reveals the truth of fascism.

One of the reasons why this issue has been downplayed in some of the recent literature on fascism is the primacy of politics found in fascist theory and practice. For fascism, the crucial feature of modern order is the political, the very sphere which Marxists and liberals are said to denigrate. For fascism, Marxism treats the political as an epiphenomenon of the economic, while liberalism treats it as mere night-watchman, overseeing a self-regulating civil society. The fascist response is to emphasize the political over the economic, to work,

in effect, with a strong concept of the political, collapsing the state–civil society distinction and subsuming civil society under the state—nothing outside of the state. The ideological effect of this is that fascism works without an economic doctrine to speak of. The practical effect is a fairly *laissez-faire* attitude to capital accumulation. Its solution to the economic contradictions and crises of capitalism is ever more authoritarian state power. For this reason commentators have tended to focus their analyses here, on the political. But the stress on the primacy of politics obscures the continuation of structures of *social* domination.

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The Politics of Revolution

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. . . Fascism undoubtedly does present itself as a revolutionary doctrine and its seizure of power as a revolution. Mussolini and Gentile continually insisted that fascism was revolutionary,[22] and leading Nazis referred to their movement as revolutionary and the regime itself as constituting a national or national socialist revolution.[23] Many commentators have taken these claims at face value and, by pointing to the supposedly revolutionary changes that the fascist regimes brought about, take the fascist claim one step further. First mooted by Hermann Rauschning in his description of Nazism as a "revolution of nihilism," the claim has been extended to incorporate arguments that Hitler did achieve a genuine social revolution or that the revolution was one of destruction, paving the way for the modernization of German society. Similar claims are made for Italy.[24] In whatever shape they come, such claims are generally intended as a riposte to Marxist arguments that fascism is by definition a counter-revolutionary and reactionary movement.

One of the difficulties faced by anyone dealing with the question of the "revolutionary" nature of fascism is that they enter what has been called a "semantic minefield,"[25] with associated concepts such as "counter-revolutionary" and "reactionary" only adding to the dangers. The minefield is made more hazardous by fascist ideology itself: as much as the fascists present themselves as revolutionary, and may sincerely think of themselves as such, they also think of themselves as counter-revolutionary and reactionary. Mussolini describes fascism in *any* language he finds useful. In regarding itself as somehow beyond all intellectual systems fascism freely borrows from them all; by being anti-systematic and anti-intellectual it does not matter whether this borrowing renders fascism unintelligible. The fact that fascism is, for Mussolini, some kind of glorious synthesis of opposites means that fascists can be "aristocrats and democrats, revolutionaries and reactionaries, proletarians and anti-proletarians, pacifists and anti-pacifists."[26] Hitler notoriously declared himself a revolutionary against the revolution.

One of the reasons why so many have lost intellectual limbs in this minefield is the careless use of the concept of revolution and, where it is not being used carelessly, the widely divergent meanings attached to the word: in some cases it refers to the demands made in fascist ideology, in others it refers to the seizure of power, while in yet others it is taken to refer to a social revolution said to have occurred in Italy and Germany once power had been seized. The confusion here is one handed down to us by the English and French revolutions (and, to a lesser extent, the Bolshevik one). But the confusion does not require us to jettison the concept of revolution (and, relatedly, counter-revolution) as some suggest.[27] One way to use the concept of revolution is to distinguish between political and social revolution, where the former represents a transformation of political power relations and the latter a transformation in the socio-economic relations of production. Revolution can be thought of as both

process and moment, where a process of revolutionary social transformation is accompanied by moments of revolutionary political change. This is the kind of distinction Marx operates with. Although for Marx 1640 and 1789 are revolutionary *moments,* the general thrust of his concern is the long term *process* by which capitalist relations of production come to dominate. It is for this reason that he points to an "era of social revolution." The strength of this lies in being able to distinguish between the long, slow and often "silent" process by which a particular mode of production and its concomitant property relations place their stamp on human relations, and the moments of political rupture or crisis in which relations of political power and authority undergo substantial alteration. . . .

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Crucially, revolutionary political moments need not necessarily contribute to a longer process of social revolution.

Clearly the seizures of power by the fascists in both Germany and Italy were reactions to the perceived crises of the state and threat of communist revolution. In Germany the failure of the political elites and institutions of the Weimar Republic to overcome the economic crises created an opening for an authoritarian intervention. In providing this intervention the Nazis obliterated the Weimar constitution and thus liberal democracy in Germany. Whether this constituted a *political* revolution is at least questionable: the old political elites continued to exist alongside the new Nazi elites, and key institutions such as the civil service and the army retained a large degree of autonomy.[28] That it did not constitute a *social* revolution is clear: the class structure remained more or less intact. In the case of Italy one may wish to describe the seizure of power as a revolutionary political moment, but thereafter the regime had no long-term revolutionary effect on the nature of the social structure. The fascist regime emerged as a new authoritarian political defence of the increasingly capitalist social order. As a centralized and authoritarian regime it could carry out some degree of social transformation—it managed to usurp Mafia power bases, for example—but it at no point sought to undermine the real class structure then in existence.[29]

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Fascism sets itself against the possibility of a communist—that is, social—revolution. The fascist political revolution is the *alternative* to social revolution; as such it is equally counter-revolutionary.[30] Hitler's description of himself as a revolutionary against the revolution thus reveals much about fascism. The double meaning of the description—on the one hand it was a revolution against the revolution of 1918 (and thus also the October revolution of the previous year), and on the other hand it was a revolution to block any future communist revolution—reveals that the fascist revolution has an essentially conservative nature. It is for this reason that liberal democracies were happy with the fascist regimes. (For example, in 1937 Lord Halifax told Hitler that he and other government colleagues "were fully aware that the Führer had not only achieved a great deal inside Germany herself, but that, by destroying communism in his country, he had barred its road to Western Europe and that Germany therefore could rightly be regarded as a bulwark of the West against Bolshevism."[31] Fascism's politically revolutionary effect—the imposition of an authoritarian regime as an illiberal solution to crises—reveals its socially conservative and counter-revolutionary essence. For this reason we can describe fascism as the culmination of the *conservative revolutionary* tradition.

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Fascism appropriated the central themes articulated by the conservative revolutionaries, radicalized them and put them into practice. And this applies to fascism generally: even

before the march on Rome, Mussolini was claiming that one could be both revolutionary and conservative.[32]

This reading of fascism . . . undermines the attempt to present it as a "third way" between capitalism and communism or as "neither right nor left." Supposedly the synthesis of all oppositions, fascism freely claims that it also overcomes the artificial right-left distinction. . . .

* * * *

If "the right" is associated with the defence of private property then fascism, given its supposed ideological opposition to capitalism, has to declare itself to be not of the right. But because of the integral links between Marxism, revolutionary anti-capitalism and "the left," fascism also has to differentiate itself from the left generally. This leaves fascism in an apparent no man's land in the battleground of political thought, which it reinterprets positively as the transcendence of false dichotomies. But the fact that fascism's opposition to capitalism is an attack on parasitical finance capital but not capitalism *per se* means that fascism is never a third way between capitalism and communism, whatever its own ideologies might say. . . .

Moreover, fascists know full well that their enemy is on the left: it is, after all, left-wing and not right-wing activists who fill the cells of fascist prisons. Conservative elites may be boring, flabby, impotent and decrepit, but they do not constitute the same kind of danger to fascism as socialism and communism. If fascism is revolutionary, then, it is a particular form of conservative revolution, and thus a revolution from the right.

Notes

1. A. James Gregor, *The Fascist Persuasion in Radical Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974); Gregor, *Young Mussolini and the Intellectual Origins of Fascism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Noel O'Sullivan, *Fascism* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1983); Zeev Sternhell, with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology: From Cultural Rebellion to Political Revolution,* trans. David Maisel (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
2. George Valois, "Empty Portfolios" (1926), in Roger Griffen (ed.), *Fascism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 197–8; Zeev Sternhell, *Neither Right Nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France,* trans. David Maisel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 105–6. On Drieu and Barrès, see Robert Soucy, *Fascist Intellectual: Drieu La Rochelle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), and *Fascism in France: The Case of Maurice Barrès* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
3. Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1925), trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1943), pp. 155, 168, 209, 333, 336, 427, 600–1, 679.
4. Herbert Marcuse, "The Struggle against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State" (1934), in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory,* trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 21. Max Horkheimer, "The Jews and Europe," in Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas MacKay Kellner (eds), *Critical Theory and Society: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 85.
5. See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology,* ed. Chris Arthur (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1970), p. 41.
6. Hitler, Speech in December 1930, cited in Tim Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich: The Working Class and the "National Community,"* trans. John Broadwin (Oxford: Berg, 1993), p. 25.
7. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1942), p. 107. Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times,* trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge: Polity, 1991), p. 44.
8. See George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1966), pp. 21–22.
9. Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," in Adrian Lyttelton (ed.), *Italian Fascisms: From Pareto to Gentile* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973), p. 42. Giovanni Gentile, "The Philosophic Basis of Fascism,"

Foreign Affairs, vol. 6, 1928, pp. 290–304, claims that corporatism is expected to unite as a productive force the whole of society. Ernst Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism: Action Française, Italian Fascism, National Socialism,* trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York: Mentor, 1969), p. 264.

10. Nolte, *Three Faces of Fascism,* p. 269; George Mosse, "Mass Politics and the Political Liturgy of Nationalism," in Eugene Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism: The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* (London: Edward Arnold, 1976), p. 40.
11. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Benjamin, *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973), p. 243.
12. Sergei Eisenstein, "On Fascism, German Cinema and Real Life. Open Letter to the German Minister of Propaganda, Dr. Goebbels," in Richard Taylor (ed. and trans.) *Sergei Eisenstein: Selected Works Vol. I, Writings 1922–1934* (London: British Film Institute, 1988), p. 283.
13. Neumann, *Behemoth,* p. 264: "whenever the outcry against the sovereignty of banking capital is injected into a popular movement, it is the surest sign that fascism is on its way."
14. After the First World War the *Popolo d'Italia* was given the new subtitle "The Newspaper of Combatants and Producers"; its previous subtitle had been "Socialist Daily." Mussolini, "Doctrine of Fascism," p. 45.
15. Roland Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy, 1919–1940: A Study of the Expansion of Private Power under Fascism* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p. 76.
16. Goebbels, *Der Nazi-Sozi* (1931), cited in Daniel Guerin, *Fascism and Big Business* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), p. 81. Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* pp. 51, 63, 65, 323.
17. Hitler, *Mein Kampf,* pp. 323, 339. He adds that trade unions are in fact crucial for national life, but they need to become national socialist and thus relinquish their role as organs of class struggle imposed on them by Marxists (pp. 598–600). John Hiden and John Farquharson, *Explaining Hitler's Germany: Historians and the Third Reich* (London: Batsford, 1983), p. 103.
18. Neumann, *Behemoth,* pp. 187, 338, 340; Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State: The Foundation and Development of the Internal Structure of the Third Reich,* trans. John Hiden (Harlow: Longman, 1981), pp. 145–6; Tim Mason, "The Law on the Organization of National Labour of 20 January 1934. An Investigation into the Relationship between 'Archaic' and 'Modern' Elements in Recent German History," in Jane Caplan (ed.) *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class: Essays by Tim Mason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 80–2; and Mason, *Social Policy in the Third Reich,* pp. 104, 164.
19. Tim Mason, "The Containment of the Working Class in Nazi Germany," in Caplan, *Nazism, Fascism and the Working Class,* p. 239. Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times,* pp. 64–8, 117–8, 141.
20. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies, Vol. 2: Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror,* trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 87.
21. See Henry Turner, *German Big Business and the Rise of Hitler* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 358. "He [Horkheimer] and the others who had applied that formula had been mistaken about the nature of Nazism at the time, but most learned nothing from their defeat. Nor have their disciples, who continue to subordinate the study of Nazism to a crusade against capitalism."
22. See Gentile, "Philosophic Basis of Fascism," p. 299.
23. See, for example, Alfred Rosenberg, "Totaler Staat?" (1934), in Robert Pois (ed.) *Alfred Rosenberg: Selected Writings* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p. 191; Adolf Hitler, "The Nationalist Socialist Revolution" (30 January 1937), in Bruce Mazlish, Arthur D. Kaledin and David B. Ralston (eds), *Revolution: A Reader* (New York: Macmillian, 1971), pp. 470–85. See Hans Mommsen, *From Weimar to Auschwitz: Essays in German History,* trans. Philip O'Connor (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p. 152, for similar comments by Goebbels.
24. Hermann Rauschning, *The Revolution of Nihilism: Warning to the West,* trans. E.W. Dickes (New York: Alliance Book Corporation, 1939). On Germany in particular, see David Schoenbaum, *Hitler's Social Revolution: Class and Status in Nazi Germany 1933–1939* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 1967); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1967), pp. 402–18; and Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Little, Brown and Co., 1996), pp. 173, 455–63. On revolution and fascism generally, see O'Sullivan, *Fascism,* p. 39; Roger Griffen, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 48; George Mosse, "Introduction: Towards a General Theory of Fascism," in Mosse (ed.), *International Fascism: New Thoughts and New Approaches* (London: Sage, 1979), pp. 5, 36.

25. Jeremy Noakes, "Nazism and Revolution," in Noel O'Sullivan (ed.), *Revolutionary Theory and Political Reality* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1983), p. 73; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation,* 2nd ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1989), p. 132.
26. Cited in Neumann, *Behemoth,* p. 378, from Mussolini's "Relativismo e Fascismo," emphasis added. Mussolini goes on to add that "it is sufficient to have a single fixed point: the nation." See also Mussolini, "Doctrine of Fascism," pp. 40, 42.
27. See, for example, Eugen Weber, "Revolution? Counter-Revolution? What Revolution?" in Walter Laqueur (ed.), *Fascism: A Reader's Guide* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 488–531.
28. Neumann, *Behemoth*; Noakes, "Nazism and Revolution," p. 84; Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship,* p. 143.
29. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1994), p. 128.
30. See Arno J. Mayer, *Dynamics of Counterrevolution in Europe, 1870–1956: An Analytic Framework* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1971).
31. Cited in Lionel Kochan, *The Struggle for Germany, 1914–1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963), p. 64. Kochan adds that while many nuances of response to Nazism existed, none was such as to go beyond accepting Germany as a partner in the struggle against communism.
32. Cited in Weber, "Revolution? Counter-revolution? What Revolution?," p. 523. See also the passages cited in note 26 above. For an account of how the work of one conservative revolutionary, Carl Schmitt, is developed partly from an understanding of Italian fascism and then used to legitimize Nazism, see Mark Neocleous, "Friend or Enemy? Reading Schmitt Politically," *Radical Philosophy,* 79, 1996, pp. 13–23.

Chapter 33

Right-Wing Populism in America

Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons

Right-wing politics in the United States has taken many forms since the end of the Cold War. The rise of the armed citizens militias accompanied electoral support for Patrick Buchanan's xenophobic economic nationalism. Christian evangelical groups at times dominated the Republican Party while the Promise Keepers filled stadiums with praying men. Major politicians denounced undocumented immigrants and poor single mothers while libertarian antigovernment attitudes flourished. On talk radio, discussions of black helicopters, secret teams, and sinister elites envisioned a massive global conspiracy. Some boldly asserted that President Clinton assisted drug smugglers, ran a hit squad that killed his political enemies, and covered up the assassination of his aide Vincent Foster. In 1995 a powerful homemade bomb—delivered in a rental truck driven by a fresh-faced American neonazi named Timothy McVeigh—destroyed the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The blast killed 167 persons (including 19 children in an onsite day care center), and injured over 650 more. One rescue worker died. Violence from the Far Right continued, targeting abortion providers, people of color, gay men and lesbians, and Jews.

. . . [W]e show how all of these phenomena involve some form of right-wing populism—a concept we think is crucial to understanding not just the U.S. political Right, but also our history as a nation. Right-wing populist movements often defy conventional explanations of "extremism" because they combine attacks on socially oppressed groups with grassroots mass mobilization and distorted forms of antielitism based on scapegoating. . . .

One of the most visible right-wing populist movements from the mid-1990s to the present has been the armed citizens militias. As the militant cutting edge of a much larger "Patriot" movement, the militias collected weapons, conducted paramilitary training, advocated armed self-defense against what they saw as an increasingly repressive federal government, and warned of a vast elite conspiracy to subject the United States to a tyrannical "New World Order."[1]

Militias and Patriot groups were complicated—bringing together hardcore neonazis with a much wider array of right-wing antigovernment activists. The movement was pervaded by conspiracy theories historically rooted in antisemitism, and by arcane constitutional doctrines that implicitly rejected women's suffrage, citizenship rights for people of color, and the abolition of slavery. Yet many supporters seemed unaware of (or indifferent to) the history or politics of these oppressive ideas. Most of the militias disavowed ethnic bigotry, and some of them included a handful of Jews and people of color as members. Here was a movement that seemingly blurred the line between hate ideology and inclusiveness, and that mixed reactionary scapegoating with progressive-sounding attacks on economic injustice, political elitism, and government repression.

As is true for the militias, members of other recent right-wing populist movements have often spoken or acted in ways that challenged outsiders' expectations. Despite a history of close collaboration between law enforcement agencies and paramilitary rightists, sections of

the neonazi–Klan movement undertook armed combat against the U.S. government beginning in the 1980s. Although the Right has regularly championed private enterprise and business interests, ultraconservative leader Patrick Buchanan denounced multinational corporations and "unfettered capitalism." Despite its traditional superpatriotism, large sections of the Right opposed the U.S.-led war on Iraq in 1990–1991, and the U.S.-led bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. Although the Christian Right was virulently antifeminist and staunchly Eurocentric, major sections of that movement urged women to become politically active and to develop leadership skills, or made genuine efforts to build alliances with conservative Black, Latino, and Asian organizations.

This type of political complexity is not new. We . . . place the Christian Right, the Buchananites, and the militias in a long line of right-wing populist movements such as Father Coughlin's movement in the 1930s, the anti-Chinese crusade of the 1880s, and the Ku Klux Klan. Right-wing populist movements often borrow political slogans, tactics, and forms of organization from the Left, but harness them to rightist goals. They attract people who often have genuine grievances against elites, but channel such resentments in ways that reinforce social, cultural, political, or economic power and privilege.

Historically, right-wing populist movements have reflected the interests of two different kinds of social groups, often in combination:

1. Middle-level groups in the social hierarchy, notably middle- and working-class Whites, who have a stake in traditional social privilege but resent the power of upper-class elites over them, and,
2. "Outsider" factions of the elite itself, who sometimes use distorted forms of antielitism as part of their own bid for greater power.

The original Ku Klux Klan of the late 1860s, for example, represented an alliance between some lower- and middle-class southern Whites (outraged that Black emancipation and Reconstruction had eroded their social privilege), and southern planters (who sought to win back some of the power they had lost to northern capitalists in the Civil War). The Klan combined racist terrorism against Black people and their allies with demagogic antielite rhetoric about northern "military despotism."

While the original Klan is generally remembered today as an "extremist" movement, its politics reflected traditions considered mainstream. For example, Jacksonianism in the early nineteenth century (on which the modern-day Democratic Party is founded), is typically thought of as a progressive reform movement that championed "the common man" and helped to democratize the U.S. political system. Yet the Jacksonian political reforms, such as Pennsylvania's 1838 Constitution, disenfranchised Black men while giving the vote to poor White men. The Jacksonians spearheaded the murderous forced expulsion of American Indians, as in the 1838 Trail of Tears, when thousands of Cherokees died after being driven from their homes at gunpoint. And the Jacksonians denounced "the money power" of federal central banking as an evil conspiracy, yet upheld class inequality. Jacksonianism represented an alliance between lower-class Whites and certain factions of the elite. When the Klan emerged a few years later as the first truly right-wing populist movement, its constituency, doctrine, and rhetoric were largely Jacksonian.

Right-wing populist movements are subject to the same basic dynamics as other social movements, and their members are, for the most part, average people motivated by a combination of material and ideological grievances and aspirations. Despite widespread popular rhetoric, it is neither accurate nor useful to portray right-wing populists as a "lunatic fringe" of marginal "extremists." Right-wing populists are dangerous not because they are crazy

irrational zealots—but because they are not. These people may be our neighbors, our coworkers, and our relatives.

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Populism

There is much confusion over the term *populism*. Margaret Canovan, in one of the few in-depth studies of the subject, mapped populism into two main branches—agrarian and political—with seven overlapping subcategories.[2] Although we do not use her typology, it shows how many different kinds of political movements and phenomena have been labeled as populist. Canovan's categories look like this:

Agrarian populism includes:

- Commodity farmer movements with radical economic agendas such as the U.S. People's Party of the late 1800s.
- Subsistence peasant movements such as eastern Europe's Green Rising movement after World War I.
- Intellectuals who wistfully romanticize hardworking farmers and peasants and build radical agrarian movements like the late-nineteenth-century Russian narodniki or the U.S. back-to-the-land movement in the 1960s.

Political populism includes:

- Populist democracy, including calls for more political participation, such as the use of referenda; recent examples include the general perspective of columnists Jim Hightower and Molly Ivins.
- Politicians' populism marked by vague appeals for "the people" to build a unified coalition such as used by Ross Perot in his presidential campaigns in the 1990s.
- Reactionary populism such as the White backlash against civil rights that was harvested by George Wallace in the 1960s and 1970s and reseeded to some extent by Patrick Buchanan in the 1990s.
- Populist dictatorship such as that established by Juan Peron in Argentina in 1945–1955 or envisioned by some U.S. neonazi groups.

Across this wide range of categories there are only two universal elements, Canovan argues: all forms of populism "involve some kind of exaltation of and appeal to 'the people,' and all are in one sense or another antielitist."[3] We take these two elements—celebration of "the people" plus some form of antielitism—as a working definition of populism. A populist movement—as opposed, for example, to one-shot populist appeals in an election campaign—uses populist themes to mobilize a mass constituency as a sustained political or social force. Our discussion of populism will focus mainly on populist movements.

Michael Kazin calls populism a style of organizing.[4] Populist movements can be on the right, the left, or in the center. They can be egalitarian or authoritarian, and can rely on decentralized networks or a charismatic leader. They can advocate new social and political relations or romanticize the past. Especially important for our purposes, populist movements can promote forms of antielitism that target either genuine structures of oppression or scapegoats alleged to be part of a secret conspiracy. And they can define "the people" in ways that

are inclusive and challenge traditional hierarchies, or in ways that silence or demonize oppressed groups.

Repressive Populism and Right-Wing Populism

We use the term *repressive populist movement* to describe a populist movement that combines antielite scapegoating . . . with efforts to maintain or intensify systems of social privilege and power. Repressive populist movements are fueled in large part by people's grievances against their own oppression but they deflect popular discontent away from positive social change by targeting only small sections of the elite or groups falsely identified with the elite, and especially by channeling most anger against oppressed or marginalized groups that offer more vulnerable targets.

Right-wing populist movements are a subset of repressive populist movements. A *right-wing populist movement,* as we use the term, is a repressive populist movement motivated or defined centrally by a backlash against liberation movements, social reform, or revolution. This does not mean that right-wing populism's goals are only defensive or reactive, but rather that its growth is fueled in a central way by fears of the Left and its political gains. The first U.S. populist movement we would unequivocally describe as right wing was the Reconstruction-era Ku Klux Klan, which was a counterrevolutionary backlash against the overthrow of slavery and Black people's mass mobilization and empowerment in the post-Civil War South. Earlier repressive populist movements paved the way for right-wing populism, but did not have this same backlash quality as a central feature.

The term "right wing" requires some attention. We do not accept the conventional definition of right wing as meaning "conservative or reactionary," because many of the movements we consider right-wing populist have advocated some form of social change, not simply preserving or restoring old institutions and relations. Conventional classifications of populist movements on a right–left spectrum are often misleading as well. . . .

Sociologist Sara Diamond has offered a simple but nuanced definition: "To be right-wing means to support the state in its capacity as *enforcer* of order and to oppose the state as *distributor* of wealth and power downward and more equitably in society."[5] This accurately describes many movements generally regarded as rightist, and has the advantage of cutting through claims that the Right consistently opposes "big government." But Diamond's definition does not cover all cases. Some rightist movements, such as Father Coughlin's Social Justice movement in the 1930s and George Wallace's American Independent Party in the 1960s, have advocated downward redistribution of wealth and power—not to everyone, but to certain groups below the elite. And some right-wing movements, such as the Ku Klux Klan of the late 1860s or various Patriot/militia groups in the 1990s, have rejected the state altogether and have sought to overthrow it, in the process rejecting and disrupting the state's order–enforcement role.

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Characteristics of Right-Wing Populism

Producerism

One of the staples of repressive and right-wing populist ideology has been *producerism,* a doctrine that champions the so-called producers in society against both "unproductive" elites and subordinate groups defined as lazy or immoral. The Jacksonians were the first major U.S. movement

to rely on producerism. Their vision of the producing classes included White farmers, laborers, artisans, slave-owning planters, and "productive" entrepreneurs; it excluded bankers, speculators, monopolists—and people of color. In this way, producerism bolstered White supremacy, blurred actual class divisions, and embraced some elite groups while scapegoating others.

After the Jacksonian era, producerism was a central tenet of the anti-Chinese crusade in the late nineteenth century. Kazin points out that as it developed in the nineteenth century,

> the romance of producerism had a cultural blind spot; it left unchallenged strong prejudices toward not just African-Americans but also toward recent immigrants who had not learned or would not employ the language and rituals of this variant of the civic religion. . . . Even those native-born activists who reached out to immigrant laborers assumed that men of Anglo-American origins had invented political democracy, prideful work habits, and well-governed communities of the middling classes.[6]

In the 1920s industrial philosophy of Henry Ford, and Father Coughlin's fascist doctrine in the 1930s, producerism fused with antisemitic attacks against "parasitic" Jews. Producerism, with its baggage of prejudice, remains today the most common populist narrative on the right, and it facilitates the use of demonization and scapegoating as political tools.[7]

Demonization and Scapegoating

Gunning down children in a Jewish community center in Los Angeles makes sense if you think Jews run the world and are thus responsible for all that is wrong in the country as a whole and your life in particular. Shooting a postal worker who is a person of color makes sense if you think lazy people of color are conspiring with the Jewish-controlled Zionist Occupational Government to rob the hardworking taxpayer. The gunman accused of committing both these acts in California in 1999 is Buford O'Neal Furrow, Jr. He emerged from a neonazi milieu where Christian Identity is the dominant religious philosophy. Christian Identity argues that Jews are in league with Satan and that Blacks and other people of color are subhuman. The battle of Armageddon prophesied in the Bible is envisioned by Christian identity as a race war. This is an extreme example of demonization, but it is hardly new. An earlier example happened during the depression of 1837–1843 when there was a wave of attacks against Catholic immigrants to the United States. Catholics were demonized in popular culture as lazy and treacherous and the resulting scapegoating generated violence. Jean Hardisty argues that the contemporary Right has frequently relied on "mobilizing resentment" as an organizing process.[8]

Demonization of an enemy often begins with marginalization, the ideological process in which targeted individuals or groups are placed outside the circle of wholesome mainstream society through political propaganda and age-old prejudice. This creates an us–them or good–bad dynamic of dualism, which acknowledges no complexity or nuance and forecloses meaningful civil debate or practical political compromise.

The next step is objectification or dehumanization, the process of negatively labeling a person or group of people so they become perceived more as objects than as real people. Dehumanization often is associated with the belief that a particular group of people is inferior or threatening. The final step is demonization; the person or group is framed as totally malevolent, sinful, and evil. It is easier to rationalize stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, scapegoating and even violence against those who are dehumanized or demonized.[9]

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We use the term *scapegoating* to describe the social process whereby the hostility and grievances of an angry, frustrated group are directed away from the real causes of a social problem onto a target group demonized as malevolent wrongdoers. The scapegoat bears the blame, while the scapegoaters feel a sense of righteousness and increased unity. The social problem may be real or imaginary, the grievances legitimate or illegitimate, and members of the targeted group may be wholly innocent or partly culpable. What matters is that the scapegoats are wrongfully stereotyped as all sharing the same negative trait, or are singled out for blame while other major culprits are let off the hook.[10]

Scapegoating often targets socially disempowered or marginalized groups. At the same time, the scapegoat is often portrayed as powerful or privileged. In this way, scapegoating feeds on people's anger about their own disempowerment, but diverts this anger away from the real systems of power and oppression. A certain level of scapegoating is endemic in most societies, but it more readily becomes an important political force in times of social competition or upheaval. At such times, especially, scapegoating can be an effective way to mobilize mass support and activism during a struggle for power.

Conspiracism

Conspiracism is a particular narrative form of scapegoating that frames the enemy as part of a vast insidious plot against the common good, while it valorizes the scapegoater as a hero for sounding the alarm. Like other forms of scapegoating, conspiracism often, though not always, targets oppressed or stigmatized groups. In many cases, conspiracism uses coded language to mask ethnic or racial bigotry, for example, attacking the Federal Reserve in ways that evoke common stereotypes about "Jewish bankers." Far-right groups have often used such conspiracy theories as an opening wedge for more explicit hate ideology.

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Mark Fenster describes how broader groups of people who are not necessarily caught up in far-right bigotry can still use conspiracism to construct a theory of power that fails to recognize how real power relations work in modern society. He argues that the phenomenon "should not be dismissed and analyzed simply as pathology," and suggests that "conspiracy theory and the contemporary practices of populist politics require a cultural analysis that can complement an ideological and empirical 'debunking.' "

According to Fenster,

> just because overarching conspiracy theories are wrong does not mean that they are not on to something. Specifically, they ideologically address real structural inequities, and constitute a response to a withering civil society and the concentration of the ownership of the means of production, which together leave the political subject without the ability to be recognized or to signify in the public realm.[11]

Certainly, real conspiracies exist: plotting in secret is one of the ways in which power is exercised (and resisted). The U.S. political scene has been littered with examples of illegal political, corporate, and government conspiracies such as Watergate, the FBI's Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) of spying and dirty tricks against dissidents, the Iran–Contra scandal, and the systematic looting of the savings and loan industry. But as Bruce Cumings argues,

> if conspiracies exist, they rarely move history; they make a difference at the margins from time to time, but with the unforeseen consequences of a logic outside the control of their

> authors: and this is what is wrong with "conspiracy theory." History is moved by the broad forces and large structures of human collectivities.[12]

Conspiracism differs in several ways from legitimate efforts to expose secret plots. First, the conspiracist worldview assigns tiny cabals of evildoers a superhuman power to control events; it regards such plots as the major motor of history. Conspiracism blames individualized and subjective forces for political, economic, and social problems rather than analyzing conflict in terms of systems, institutions, and structures of power.

Second, conspiracism tends to frame social conflict in terms of a transcendant struggle between Good and Evil that reflects the influence of the apocalyptic paradigm.

Third, in its efforts to trace all wrongdoing to one vast plot, conspiracism plays fast and loose with the facts. While conspiracy theorists often start with a grain of truth and "document" their claims exhaustively, they make leaps of logic in analyzing evidence, such as seeing guilt by association or treating allegations as proven fact.[13]

Conspiracist attacks can be directed either "upward" or "downward." *Antielite conspiracism* (or *antielite scapegoating*) targets groups seen as sinister elites abusing their power from above. *Countersubversive scapegoating* targets groups portrayed as subversives trying to overturn the established order from below or from within.

Antielite conspiracism has deep roots in U.S. political culture. In some versions, antielite scapegoating attacks groups who do not really dominate society (such as Jews or Catholics); in other cases, it targets subgroups within the elite power structure (such as bankers, the Trilateral Commission, the Central Intelligence Agency, or the World Trade Organization). What these versions share, and what especially defines antielite conspiracism, is that the scapegoat is seen as a subjective, alien force that distorts the normal workings of society. Thus, despite its "radical" veneer, antielite conspiracism shares the mainstream assumptions that the United States is fundamentally democratic, and that any injustice results from selfish special interest groups, not from underlying systems of power and oppression.

U.S. elites, meanwhile, have long propagated fears of subversive conspiracies: bloodthirsty slaves plotting mass murder, disloyal immigrants undermining U.S. institutions, labor unionists spreading criminal anarchy, or godless Reds bent on global dictatorship. Whether cynical constructs or projections of the elite's own nightmares, such images have been used to demonize antioppression struggles by playing on people's fears of disorder, violence, invasion, and moral collapse.

As Frank J. Donner noted, propaganda based on a myth of the enemy "other" has helped to justify antidemocratic activities by state security forces and their allies, including spying, harassment, judicial persecution, forced removal, and physical violence. And, Donner argued, "In a period of social and economic change during which traditional institutions are under the greatest strain, the need for the myth is especially strong as a means of transferring blame, an outlet for the despair [people] face when normal channels of protest and change are closed."[14] In these ways, countersubversive scapegoating has played an important role in this country's system of social control, bolstering elite privilege and power.

Apocalyptic Narratives and Millennial Visions

The poisoned fruit of conspiracist scapegoating is baked into the American apple pie, and its ingredients include destructive versions of apocalyptic fears and millennialist expectations. This is true whether we are studying Christian-based right-wing movements consciously influenced by biblical prophecy, or more secularized right-wing movements for which Bible-based apocalypticism and millennialism have faded into unconscious—yet still influential—metaphors.[15]

Apocalypticism—the anticipation of a righteous struggle against evil conspiracies—has influenced social and political movements throughout U.S. history.[16] Early Christian settlers saw America as a battlefield for a prophetic struggle between good and evil. Starting in the 1620s, witch hunts swept New England for a century.[17] Many of the insurgent colonists who brought about the American Revolution invoked apocalyptic and millennial themes, as did the Antimasons and Jacksonians who denounced banks in the 1830s. Apocalypticism infused the evangelical Protestant revival that contributed to the Ku Klux Klan's rise in the 1920s and influenced both fascist and non-fascist rightists during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Today, apocalypticism remains a central narrative in our nation's religious, secular, political, and cultural discourse.[18] Numerous authors have noted that the contemporary Christian Right is significantly motivated and mobilized by apocalyptic and millennialist themes.[19] Yet as Richard Landes observes, apocalyptic activities rarely "receive more than a passing mention in 'mainstream' analyses."[20]

In its generic sense, the word apocalypse has come to mean the belief in an approaching confrontation, cataclysmic event, or transformation of epochal proportion, about which a select few have forewarning so they can make appropriate preparations. Those who believe in a coming apocalypse might be optimistic about the outcome of the apocalyptic moment, anticipating a chance for positive transformational change; or they might be pessimistic, anticipating a doomsday; or they might anticipate a period of violence or chaos with an uncertain outcome.[21] Christian apocalyptic fervor appears, often at seemingly random dates, throughout Western history.[22] A major U.S. episode of Christian millennialist fervor occurred among the Millerites in the 1840s, some of whom sold their worldly belongings and pilgrimaged to a mountaintop to experience the Rapture that they hoped in vain would sweep them up into God's protective embrace.[23] The apocalyptic tradition also exists in Judaism, Islam, and other religions.[24]

Apocalypticism is the principal source for what Richard Hofstadter called the "paranoid style" in American politics. According to Damian Thompson:

> Richard Hofstadter was right to emphasise the startling affinities between the paranoid style and apocalyptic belief—the demonisation of opponents, the sense of time running out, and so on. But he stopped short of making a more direct connection between the two. He did not consider the possibility that the paranoia he identified actually derived from apocalyptic belief.[25]

The process of demonization, a consistent factor in scapegoating, takes on special features during periods of apocalyptic fear or millennial expectation. Apocalyptic thinking meshes readily with producerism, since the good (and often Godly) people are counterposed against the traitorous elites and their lazy and sinful allies.

Millennialism is a specific form of apocalyptic expectation.[26] Most contemporary Christian fundamentalists believe that when Christ returns, he will reign for a period of 1,000 years—a millennium. Yet not all contemporary Christians promote apocalyptic demonization. Within Christianity, there are two competing views of how to interpret the apocalyptic and millennial themes in the Bible, especially the book of Revelation. One view identifies evil with specific persons and groups, seeking to identify those in league with the Devil. A more optimistic form of interpreting apocalyptic prophecy is promoted by those Christians who see evil in the will to dominate and oppress.[27] Apocalyptic thinking, in this case, seeks justice for the poor and weak. The two interpretations represent a deep division within Christianity. The dangerous form of millennialism comes not from Christianity per se, but from Christians who combine biblical literalism, apocalyptic timetables, demonization, and oppressive prejudices.

Christian apocalypticism and millennialism are based on many sources in the Bible, including the Old Testament books of Daniel and Ezekiel, and the New Testament Gospel of Matthew. The primary biblical source, however, is the book of Revelation, the last book of the Christian New Testament. Many Christians on the political Right who are looking for the "signs of the End Times" adopt a particular demonizing way of interpreting prophecy in the book of Revelation.

In this view, a powerful and charismatic agent of the Devil—the Antichrist—comes to earth along with his ally—the False Prophet. They appear disguised in the form of widely respected political and religious leaders. Promising peace and prosperity, these leaders launch a popular campaign to build a one-world government and a one-world religion. Many Christians are fooled, but a few recognize that these leaders are the prophesized Antichrist and the False Prophet, and thus actually Satanic traitors. Agents of the Antichrist try to force devout Christians to accept the Mark of the Beast (sometimes the number 666) which would mean they reject Christ. A wave of political and religious repression sweeps the world, with devout Christians rounded up and persecuted for their beliefs. Christians with this view read the book of Revelation as a warning about a government conspiracy and betrayal by trusted political and religious leaders in the End Times. A secular version of this narrative appears in conspiracy theories about liberal collectivists building a global new world order through the United Nations.

These apocalyptic themes buttress the producerist narrative in right-wing populist movements. This is the narrative of Pat Robertson's *700 Club* TV broadcasts, the newsletter of Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America, and scores of other Christian Right media outlets. As the year 2000 approached a number of apocalyptic and millennial social movements surged in excitement and activism. Some were religious, such as the Promise Keepers, some were secular, such as the armed militias. These social movements sought to influence public policy, social conduct, and cultural attitudes, sometimes coming into conflict with the established order and state power.

Social Movements and Social Structures

While they may express apocalyptic fervor or millennialist expectation, mass political and social movements are composed of people motivated by a sense of grievance—legitimate or illegimate—who mobilize to seek redress of their grievances through a variety of methods often including, but seldom limited to, the electoral process.[28] These grievances flow from social, cultural, and economic tensions that combine and vary over time. Most participants in these groups and movements try to organize others using rational strategies and tactics—even if their claims seem bizarre or conspiracist and their goals are illegitimate and prejudiced—and in defense of disproportionate access to power, wealth, and privilege.[29]

Our view of social movements is hardly unique. As Christian Smith observes,

> The 1970s saw a major break in the social-movement literature with earlier theories—e.g., mass society, collective behavior, status discontent, and relative deprivation theories—that emphasized the irrational and emotional nature of social movements. . . . There was at the time a decisive pendulum-swing away from these "classical" theories toward the view of social movements as rational, strategically calculating, politically instrumental phenomena.[30]

While these newer and more complex social movement theories have shaped some popular discussions of liberal and radical social change movements, they have been less successful in changing the public discourse about right-wing movements.

We see two common pitfalls in contemporary discussions of right-wing populist movements. On one side, many liberals and moderate conservatives routinely portray such movements as paranoid fringe phenomena fundamentally at odds with the political mainstream. A standard premise is that the U.S. political system has an essence of democracy and freedom—a vital center of pragmatism, rationality, and tolerance—but that this essence is threatened by extremists from the left and right. This *centrist/extremist* model, as we call it, obscures the rational choices and partially legitimate grievances that help to fuel right-wing populist movements, and hides the fact that right-wing bigotry and scapegoating are firmly rooted in the mainstream social and political order. Centrist/extremist theory is the dominant model used by government agencies, mass media, and major human relations groups to portray right-wing movements. It is based to a large degree on the pessimistic studies of populism by Daniel Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Earl Raab, and others.

Centrist/extremist theory does not stand up to the field work done by social scientists who have studied members of right-wing (and left-wing) movements and groups and found them no more or less mentally unbalanced, politically dysfunctional, or "fringe" than their neighbors.[31] Nor does centrist/extremist theory allow us to recognize the frequent direct linkages—ideological, organizational, and economic—between right-wing and mainstream political forces.

Centrist/extremist theory fosters a dangerous complacency about mainstream politics and institutions. It has often been used to rally support for moderate versions of oppressive politics—for example, to attack Republicans and bolster the Democratic Party, even as Democratic leaders embrace traditionally right-wing positions. In addition, because it logically relies on government crackdowns to protect us from the "irrational zealots," centrist/extremist theory fuels the growth of state repression, and can serve as a rationale for aiding repressive government surveillance operations.[32]

On the other side of the coin, some left-leaning people have portrayed sections of the insurgent Right, especially the militias, as positive expressions of grassroots discontent, and as legitimate allies against the state and the elite.[33] In addition, some liberals and leftists have echoed right-wing conspiracy theories about the U.S. government and big business.[34] These positions romanticize populist activism and overlook the immediate and long-term dangers posed by right-wing movements. They also help blur the dividing line between an analysis of systemic and institutionalized oppression and conspiracist scapegoating, which is often rooted in and facilitates ethnic bigotry.

In contrast to both centrist/extremist doctrine and the left-romanticist view, we see right-twing populist movements as having a complex relationship with the established power structure: both rooted in it and distinct from it, opposing it in some ways yet bolstering it in others. Such movements often have close links with economic and political elites, yet they are not simply ruling-class puppets, but rather autonomous social forces with their own agendas and mass appeal. Right-wing populist movements often help to strengthen social oppression, yet they are themselves fueled by popular discontent at elite privilege and power.

The contradictions within right-wing populism point to tensions and complexities in the larger social order. We describe the U.S. political system as *pluralist,* meaning that a certain range of political debate and conflict between different political organizations, factions, and tendencies is accepted as legitimate, and civil liberties are protected to a degree. Yet we do not believe that this system has lived up to its image as a democracy, because most political and economic power is held by a tiny wealthy elite.[35] In our view, class hierarchy, racial and national oppression, male dominance, and other systems of social control have always been central to U.S. society.

At the same time, the social power structure is not divided neatly between oppressors and oppressed. Because there are many different intersecting lines of power, the majority of

people occupy contradictory positions in society: they are oppressed in some ways but hold varying degrees of relative privilege in other ways. Such privilege brings social, political, or economic benefits that give many people a tangible stake in the very system that keeps them down. Even elite forces, while sharing basic interests, are internally divided. As business conflict theorists have argued, factional divisions within the elite play a major role in political life.[36] In some situations, both intraelite conflict and people's contradictory status can foster a kind of double-edged politics: a dissatisfaction with the people in charge, coupled with a desire to preserve or strengthen certain social inequalities. This double-edged politics often finds expression in repressive populist movements.

Mapping the Right

Since the 1970s, the political center of gravity in the United States has moved dramatically to the right. This shift is often identified with the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich, but the Democratic Party, too, has largely embraced traditional right-wing positions regarding "welfare reform," "crime," "illegal aliens," and a host of other issues. The right turn has been driven by both elite policymakers and a range of mass-based political movements, from the electoral activism of the Christian Coalition to the insurrectionism of citizen militias.

We use various terms to describe specific gradations of right-wing politics, populist and otherwise. The *Reactionary Right* seeks to turn the clock back toward an idealized past. *Conservatism* emphasizes stability and order, and generally some combination of cultural traditionalism and "free-market" economics. *Ultraconservatism* goes beyond the conservative defense of the established order while stopping short of demands to fully eliminate pluralist institutions. The *Christian Right* is motivated by religious interpretations of cultural, social, and economic issues, and has branches that otherwise fall into all the other sectors of the Right, including the Hard Right and the Far Right.

The *Hard Right* takes an inflexible approach to politics and rejects pluralistic discourse in principle or in practice. Hard rightists may be either elitist or mass activist in their organizing, and may include both ultraconservatives and far rightists. The *Far Right* squarely rejects the existing political system, and pluralist institutions generally, in favor of some form of authoritarianism.

Fascism, in our usage, is the most virulent form of far-right populism. Fascism glorifies national, racial, or cultural unity and collective rebirth while seeking to purge imagined enemies, and attacks both revolutionary socialism and liberal pluralism in favor of militarized, totalitarian mass politics.[37] There are many definitions of fascism, and the term is often misused. Fascist movements are a product of the twentieth century, and first crystallized in Europe in response to the Bolshevik Revolution and the devastation of World War I. In the United States, fascist movements have blended European ideological imports with homegrown repressive populist traditions, and first became a significant political force during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Today, in addition to the openly fascist organizations of the neonazi Right, fascist groupings (and more broadly, fascist tendencies) play a significant role in larger right-wing populist movements. Certain fascistic tendencies can be detected in the militias, the Buchananites, and in the most militant authoritarian sectors of the Christian Right.

Although the role of fascism in right-wing movements needs to be addressed, it is frequently overstated, and it would be a serious mistake to regard a "fascist takeover" as the main threat of right-wing populism. The danger associated with right-wing populism comes not only from its real or potential bids for power, or even from its day-to-day violence,

bigotry, and scapegoating, but also from its interactions with other political forces and with the government.

The 1990s saw a dangerous interplay, for example, between right-wing paramilitarism and state repression. The government's response to the militias following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing made it clear that anti-democratic initiatives do not only come from hard-right political movements. President Bill Clinton exploited fears of the Right to promote sweeping "counter-terrorism" legislation that represented a serious attack on civil liberties. This in turn bolstered widespread fears of state repression, some of which militia groups were able to exploit. (The Terrorism Prevention and Effective Death Penalty Act, signed by Clinton in April 1996, was promoted based on claims that the militia movement bombed the Oklahoma City federal building, and claims that TWA Flight 800 bound for Paris was sent into the sea by a terrorist bomb. Both claims were false. All credible evidence suggests that Timothy McVeigh, convicted in the Oklahoma City bombing, was a neonazi trying to move the less militant and largely defensive militia movement into more aggressive insurrectionist action, and that Flight 800 was downed by a mechanical flaw.)

Here and in many other instances, we see a dynamic tension between right-wing populist movements, including the insurrectionist Far Right, and mainstream electoral politics. Such movements help pull the entire political spectrum to the right and make mainstream forms of brutality and injustice look more acceptable by comparison.

Notes

1. Neiwert, *In God's Country*; Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*; Stern, *Force Upon the Plain*; Burghart and Crawford, *Guns and Gavels*.
2. Canovan, *Populism,* pp. 13, 128–138.
3. Ibid., pp. 289, 293, 294. Canovan notes that there are "a great many interconnections" among her seven forms of populism, and that "many phenomena—perhaps most—belong in more than one category." She adds that "given the contradictions" between some of the categories, "none could ever satisfy all the conditions at once."
4. Kazin, *Populist Persuasion*. See also Harrison, *Of Passionate Interest*.
5. Diamond, *Roads to Dominion,* p. 9.
6. Kazin, *Populist Persuasion,* p. 35.
7. Our conception of producerism is derived from Alexander Saxton's discussion of the "Producer Ethic" as an ideology of the early White labor movement that "emphasized an egalitarianism reserved for whites" (Saxton, *Rise and Fall of the White Republic,* p. 313). See also p. 298; and *Indispensable Enemy,* pp. 21–22, 52, 265–269.

   Our conception is also deeply influenced by Moishe Postone's discussion of how modern antisemitism draws a false dichotomy between "productive" industrial capital and "parasitic" finance capital. See Postone, "Anti-Semitism and National Socialism," especially pp. 106–113.

   We use the term producerism in a different way than Catherine McNicol Stock does in her book *Rural Radicals*. Stock portrays producerism simply as a form of populist antielitism, separate from (though sometimes coinciding with) attacks on socially oppressed groups. In our view, producerism intrinsically involves a dual-edged combination of antielitism and oppression (in the U.S. setting, usually in the form of racism or antisemitism, but also sexism and homophobia) and it is precisely this combination that must be addressed.
8. Hardisty, *Mobilizing Resentment*.
9. Aho, *This Thing of Darkness,* pp. 107–121. See also Young-Bruehl, *Anatomy of Prejudices*; and Noël, *Intolerance, A General Survey*.
10. See Allport, *Nature of Prejudice,* pp. 243–260; Girard, *Scapegoat*.
11. Fenster, *Conspiracy Theories,* pp. 67, 74. For additional views of the cultural context of conspiracism, see Dean, *Aliens in America*; Schultz, ed., *Fear Itself*; and Marcus, ed., *Paranoia within Reason*; Melley, *Empire of Conspiracy*.

12. Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War: Vol. 2,* p. 767. See also Albert, "Conspiracy? . . . Not!"; "Conspiracy? . . . Not, Again."
13. Hofstadter, *Paranoid Style in American Politics,* pp. 37–38.
14. Donner, *Age of Surveillance,* p. 11.
15. This analysis of apocalyptic demonization and millennialism is drawn primarily from the following sources:

    For apocalypticism: Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*; Strozier, *Apocalypse*; O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse*; Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist*; Lamy, *Millennium Rage*; Thompson, *End of Time*; Fenn, *End of Time*.

    For Christian critiques of conspiracist apocalyptics:
    Camp, *Selling Fear*; Abanes, *End-Time Visions*; and Sine, *Cease Fire*.

    For a progressive challenge to apocalyptic thinking: Quinby, *Anti-Apocalypse*.

    For apocalyptic demonization: Pagels, *Origins of Satan,* and Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*; Aho, *This Thing of Darkness*.

16. The word *apocalypse* comes from the Greek, "*apokalypsis*" which means unveiling hidden information or revealing secret knowledge concerning unfolding human events. The word "revelation" is another way to translate the idea of *apokalypsis*. Thus, the words "apocalypse," "revelation," and "prophecy" are closely related. Prophets, by definition, are apocalyptic. See LaHaye, *Revelation,* p. 9.
17. Devout Christians in Salem, Massachusetts, and other towns sought to expose witches and their allies as conspiring with the Devil (Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist,* pp. 56–61, 63.) Modern scholarship has shown that persons accused of being witches were disproportionately women who did not conform to societal expectations, and that there was frequently an economic dimension to the charge, such as a disputed inheritance. See Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman,* pp. 46–116.
18. This can be found in a wide range of sources; see O'Sullivan, "Satanism Scare"; Victor, "Search for Scapegoat Deviants"; Zeskind, "Some Ideas on Conspiracy Theories"; Blee, "Engendering Conspiracy"; Harrington, "Conspiracy Theories and Paranoia"; Stern, "Militias and the Religious Right"; Price, "Antichrist Superstar"; and Stix, "Apocalypse Shmapocalypse"; Daniels, ed., *Doomsday Reader*.
19. See, for example, Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More,* pp. 254–339; Strozier, *Apocalypse,* pp. 108–129; O'Leary, *Arguing the Apocalypse,* pp. 134–193; Fuller, *Naming the Antichrist,* pp. 165–190; Frances FitzGerald, "American Millennium"; Halsell, *Prophecy and Politics*; Harding, "Imagining the Last Days; Diamond, *Not by Politics Alone,* pp. 197–215; *Spiritual Warfare,* pp. 130–136; and "Political Millennialism"; Clarkson, *Eternal Hostility,* pp. 125–138; Kintz, *Between Jesus and the Market,* pp. 8–9, 134–139, 266–267; Herman, *Antigay Agenda,* pp. 19–24, 35–44, 125–128, 171–172.
20. Landes, "On Owls, Roosters, and Apocalyptic Time."
21. Bromley, "Constructing Apocalypticism"; and Wessinger, "Millennialism With and Without the Mayhem."
22. Cohn, *Pursuit of the Millennium*.
23. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More,* pp. 80–85.
24. See, generally, Cohn, *Cosmos, Chaos and the World to Come*.
25. Thompson, *End of Time,* p. 307.
26. The word millennium refers to a span of 1,000 years, but also has many deeper meanings. It has come to mean the point at which one period of a thousand years ends and the next begins, and for some this has important religious, social, or political significance. This was certainly the case as the year 2000 approached. All millennial movements are apocalyptic in some sense, even when positive and hopeful; but not all apocalyptic movements are millennial.
27. See, for example, Berrigan, *Ezekiel*; Gomes, *Good Book*; Camp, *Selling Fear*.
28. We reject narrow definitions of what constitutes a social movement applied by some academics. Challenge to centrist/extremist theory by social scientists who study the Right include Rogin, *Intellectuals and McCarthy,* pp. 261–282; Curry and Brown, eds., "Introduction," pp. xi–xii; Ribuffo, *Old Christian Right,* pp. 237–257; *Canovan Populism,* pp. 46–51, 179–190; Himmelstein, *To The Right* pp. 1–5, 72–76, 152–164; Diamond, *Roads to Dominion* 5–6, 40–41; Kazin, *Populist Persuasion,* pp. 190–193. Hixson, in *Search for the American Right Wing,* analyzes Rogin's criticisms.
29. For reviews of social movement theory in transition see Buechler, *Social Movements in Advanced Capitalism,* pp. 3–57; and Garner and Tenuto, *Social Movement Theory and Research,* pp. 1–48.

30. Smith, "Correcting a Curious Neglect," p. 3.
31. Aho, *This Thing of Darkness*.
32. The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is a prime example of centrist/extremist theory being used to help rationalize collaboration with state repression. On the ADL's spying against progressive organizations and collaboration with U.S., South African, and Israeli espionage agencies, see Friedman, "Enemy Within"; Dennis King and Chip Berlet, "A.D.L. Under Fire"; "ADLgate"; Jane Hunter, "Who was the ADL spying for?"; Jabara, "Anti-Defamation League."
33. An example of leftist romanticization of the militia movement is Murray, "Chiapas & Montana." For a critique of this type of portrayal, see Biehl, "Militia Fever"; and Biehl and Staudenmaier, *Ecofascism*.
34. See Berlet, *Right Woos Left*.
35. Domhoff, *Powers That Be; Who Rules America*?; Mills, *Power Elite*.
36. For an overview of business conflict analysis in comparison with other theories of politics, see Gibbs, *Political Economy of Third World Intervention,* ch. 1. For other examples of business conflict analysis, see Ferguson and Rogers, *Right Turn*; Ferguson, *Golden Rule*; Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War: Vol. 2,* chs. 2 and 3; Davis, *Prisoners of the American Dream,* pp. 167–176; Ansell, "Business Mobilization and the New Right"; Bodenheimer and Gould, *Rollback!*; Cox, *Power and Profits*; Lyons, "Business Conflict and Right-Wing Movements."
37. Lyons, "What is Fascism?"

    The literature on fascism is vast. A few general discussions we have found particularly useful are Griffin, *Nature of Fascism*; Payne, *Fascism*; Eley, "What Produces Fascism," pp. 69–99; and Mayer, *Dynamics of Counterrevolution in Europe*.

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Chapter 34

Noam Chomsky on Left Prospects

Universalizing Across Boundaries

Noam Chomsky and Charles Derber

Charlie Derber: Noam, recently you gave a very powerful talk on the theme of extinction, the nightmare looming over us from climate change and nuclear war. As I listened and read the transcript, one gets the feeling that we're entering a new stage of history. It's not an easy stage to contemplate. What I want to focus on in this conversation is just what can everybody do, especially in the wake of Trump's election as President. Trump's agenda appears to be taking out the climate initiatives that gave a little hope on climate change. And foreign policy measures that would make nuclear conflict more likely deserve attention in our discussion of extinction.

Do you believe we have moved into this new era? Do you see the threat of extinction as fundamentally changing the way the Left movements have to think about what they're doing?

Noam Chomsky: It's very difficult to talk about the Left as an entity because it's a collection of very disparate movements involved in all sorts of endeavors, many of them quite valuable.

The Left needs to become unified and integrated because whatever particular issue you're working on, this crisis of potential extinction is overshadowing it. There must be international solidarity.

The situation for organizing here is not that bleak. If you take a look at the last election, Clinton won a majority of the votes. The outcome has to do with special features of the US electoral system, which is pretty regressive by world standards. Among younger people, Clinton did win a substantial majority. More important, Sanders won an overwhelming majority. That's the younger part of the population. You take a look at Trump supporters. Many of them voted for Obama.

In 2008, they were seduced by his slogan which was Hope and Change. They pretty quickly found out that they're not getting hope and they're not getting change. Now they voted for someone else who's preaching hope and change, different orientation. They want change. They're right. The situation that much of the workforce and lower middle class has lived in is, it's not starvation, but it's stagnation.

The system has been designed. It's not a matter of economic laws. It's policy and decisions, which have been quite harmful to a large mass of the population. In fact, a majority. It's also undermined democracy, both here and even more so in Europe. There's a natural and justified call for

change. These are opportunities for the Left. Many of the people who voted for Trump could have voted for Sanders.

Charlie Derber: A lot of people are saying now, they're putting a lot of onus of responsibility on Obama and on Clinton.

The Left has been highly critical of neoliberalism. But it hasn't been seen broadly by the population. Particularly the working-class parts of the population that you're identifying as being really harmed by this, as that somehow neither the Left nor the Democratic Party is really speaking to them. It's speaking to coastal elites, it's speaking to educated people, speaking maybe to young educated people. It's not speaking to them.

Noam Chomsky: Not speaking to people who are really deprived.

The Left should be working with and for the African-American community, it should be working on civil rights, it should be working for gay rights, for women's rights, and so on. That's fine. What it has dropped pretty much is class issues.

Charlie Derber: Would you encourage the Left to rethink the class issue and economic opportunities—that maybe a Sanders-style development will help reconfigure the Left? Not that it abandons the most depressed people in the society, but it finds a way to deal with larger forces of inequality, as you say, as integrated within the larger capitalist systems.

Noam Chomsky: It's certainly a must. The so-called identity politics has led to great successes, but when they are designed and presented in such a way that they appear to be an attack on the lifestyle, values, commitments of a large part of the population, there's going to be reaction. That shouldn't be done.

Charlie Derber: For example, the progressive movement uses the language of white privilege. Some of the people who live in working-class areas, white working-class areas, they look at that and they say, "What are you talking about? We're not seeing this privilege." Does this require the Left to re-assess its vocabulary?

Noam Chomsky: It's not just about our vocabulary. It's about an understanding. Actually, Arlie Hochschild's book is very revealing in this respect.

Charlie Derber: *Strangers in Their Own Land*. Hochschild is a noted sociologist.

Noam Chomsky: We know the story. She's lived for many years in the bayou country in Louisiana and gave a very sympathetic understanding, conception of what the people are thinking and why, from a point of view of a Berkeley progressive, which she is. She was accepted into the community. It's very revealing. The images she uses, which they accepted as the correct ones, is that people . . . they see themselves as standing in a line. They've been working hard all their lives, their parents worked hard, they're doing all the right things. . . . They go to church, they read the Bible, they have traditional families, and so on. They've done everything the right way.

All of the sudden the line is stalled. Up ahead of them, there are people leaping forward, which doesn't bother them because according to the doctrine, that's the American way. You work hard and you have merit, strange kind of merit, you get rewards. What bothers them is that the people behind them in the line, as they see it, are being pushed ahead of them by the federal government.

Charlie Derber: By liberal elites and so forth.

Noam Chomsky: By liberal elites and the federal government. That they resent. The facts are different. There's no basis in fact, but you can understand the basis for the perception. That can be dealt with by serious activist organizing. Many of the people Hochschild was dealing with are committed environmentalists, but they hate the EPA. They want to destroy the Environment Protection Agency. The families are very interesting. Hochschild's working in an area which is sometimes called cancer alley. Everybody's dying from cancer from the chemical pollution plants. Nevertheless, they vote for a Congressman who wants to dismantle the EPA entirely.

There's a reason. Turns out, there's an internal rationality to this self-destructive position. Organizers and activists can go after that. The internal rationality is that what they see is some guy from the EPA wearing a suit and jacket coming down to tell them, "You can't fish in this river." Meanwhile, he does nothing about the chemical plants. Why do they want the EPA?

Charlie Derber: Do you see any examples of progressive Left organizing that really operate out of that Hochschild narrative and find a way to really connect with these communities in a credible way to these people?

Noam Chomsky: The core of this, I think, which you've mentioned several times, is revitalizing the labor movement. Reasons include scale, history, and so on, the ways people interact, gain understanding, and become committed to work together for common goals that will benefit all. Labor has always been and will continue to be pretty much in the forefront of any progressive activities, just as it has been in the past. It's been severely damaged by corporate and government programs going back to right after the Second World War, but escalating during the Reagan and Clinton period, the neoliberal period. It can be revitalized. These are not just people living in the bayous. They're living 2 miles away from us. There are things to be done.

Just to take one example, a couple of years ago in a Boston suburb, Taunton, Mass., some multi-national decided to close down a factory. It was a factory producing specialized parts for airplanes. The factory was reasonably profitable, but it wasn't making enough profit for the bankers that run the multi-national, so they decided to close it down. The union and the workforce offered to buy it and run it themselves. It could have been run and been profitable. If they had had popular support, community support, activist support, they might have been able to work that out.

Charlie Derber: That's been done. Gar Alperovitz has documented that in Ohio . . .

Noam Chomsky: It's done, but this is a case right here in Boston. The things that Gar Alperovitz is doing, that are going on right now, these are indications of what could be done much more broadly. It could be done right here. It could be done on a mass scale. Go back to the financial crisis, really a housing bubble that burst and led to the financial crisis. At one point, the government, federal government, had basically nationalized the auto industry. Almost. There were choices at that point. If there had been a Left functioning, it could have influenced those choices. There was not, so it didn't influence them.

Charlie Derber: You mean by a Left functioning, do you mean a more active labor, popular community-based . . .

Noam Chomsky: Popular activist movements. There were choices that could *have been* made. One choice, the one that was taken, was to pay off the owners and managers, reconstitute the industry and hand it back to the former owners or other people much like them and have it go back to its old activities. That's the course that was taken. An alternative course would have been to have handed the industry over to the stakeholders, the workforce and the community. They'd need some support but no more than . . . probably less than what was paid off to the companies. Instead of having them produce cars, have them own and run and manage it and produce what the country needs, which is not more cars. Drive through Boston and you see that's not what the country needs.

What we need is some reasonable system of mass transportation, which goes right to the environmental problem and many others. Even just the simple comfort of not sitting in a traffic jam all day in getting where you want to go. That would have been an alternative. Was it feasible? It would have been feasible if there were an organized activist Left, just as in the Taunton case nearby. Those are directions in which activism can go. They can have massive effect on the economy, on the society, on the nature of the workforce, on what they perceive as real hope and change. Things like that can happen almost every day.

Charlie Derber: When you talk about this organized Left community as a front that's . . . do you have a more concrete image of what that looks like? Does it mean environmental movements and anti-racist movements becoming part of a unified . . .

Noam Chomsky: All of that, but even more than that. It can also become a serious independent party. In the US system, which happens to be very regressive by comparative standards, it's very hard for an independent party to enter the political system, but it's not impossible. If an authentic independent political party would develop, it could become an electoral alternative. That means a party that doesn't just show up every 4 years and say, I have a candidate for the election. It means starting at the local levels. School boards, town meetings, state legislatures, House of Representatives, all the way up. In some of these House of Representatives districts, a very small amount of money is enough to win the election. Many of them run unopposed. State legislature is the same.

Charlie Derber: Ralph Nader has been making this argument, that you have, district by district, a small number of people whom could be elected. There's a lot of debate about whether this is an independent party or working with some of the Sanders people to align with progressive Democrats. What's your view of how to think about that?

Noam Chomsky: I don't think you have to make a decision on that. You can try both and see which one succeeds. They're not opposed.

I think it's worth trying everything you can. If the Democratic Party could be taken away from the party bosses, the huge funders, the Democratic machine and turned into a popular party, fine. If an independent party . . .

Charlie Derber: In your view, just in terms of your personal view, is that a realistic possibility? Could Sanders, Warren, some of these new people who tried to get Pelosi out and dig in with labor, is this worth doing in your view?

Noam Chomsky: It's worth doing and it's not an alternative to trying to develop an independent party. Both should be done. They could even cooperate.

This is only one stream. This should be going on alongside many other activist efforts. For example, the effort, say, to get to worker ownership in Taunton or at a large-scale level to shift the whole auto industry toward what it ought to be, which could have been done had there been some kind of activist Left like we're talking about. I think there's a basis for developing that.

Charlie Derber: I think you're saying there's a very pluralistic set of possibilities for the communities we're talking about.

Noam Chomsky: A healthy Left would be one in which individuals, of course, follow what they're good at, what makes sense to them, what fits into their life, and so on. You have to make choices. You can't do everything. Each of those individuals should recognize that the many other choices are parallel and mutually supportive, and we can get together and . . .

Charlie Derber: You want to build connections among these different organizations and different communities.

Noam Chomsky: In the past that has often been built around the labor movement. If the labor movement can be revitalized, that can happen again. It doesn't have to be just labor, but that should be a central part.

Charlie Derber: You brought up Trump and the neo-fascist trend we're seeing across the world, across Europe, and so forth. You know a lot about fascism and the problems with popular fronts and so forth. Do you see unification emerging . . . extinction itself ought to be bringing people together because it's the biggest crisis ever faced. The rising of Trump and his contribution to all these threatening things might unify people as well.

Noam Chomsky: Could happen. First of all, in Europe, there are progressive alternatives developing just as there are here. Yanis Varoufakis's DiEM25 initiative, Podemos in Spain. Corbyn in the UK . . .

Charlie Derber: New party, more visionary party . . .

Noam Chomsky: Some of it *is* parties, some organizations . . . seeking to reverse the undermining of democracy in Europe and build it. Not to destroy the European union like Brexit, but to try to rebuild a democratic European union, save what was good and important in it. That could become an important movement. There are many things developing. They should develop in an integrated fashion. In fact, there are other possible alliances. The Right wing in Europe, many elements of it, are opposed to the increasing confrontation with Russia, on the Russian border. That's fine. Trump is saying, let's reduce tensions. Fine. We should be working for that. All of these are alliances of human beings, whatever their politics, whatever their religious beliefs, whatever it may be, with the interest in preserving human life on earth. Those interactions should be pursued and can lead to other ones. They don't end there.

Charlie Derber: Ralph Nader has made very strongly the case, that there are ways that these communities can find common ground.

Noam Chomsky: They do.

Charlie Derber: There are people like Thomas Frank who have argued the cultural differences are so profound, the religious differences are so profound, that he finds this very problematic. Then there are other people like Hochschild

and a lot of other writers, like Nader, people who are saying if we do this in a way that we bring people in direct contact with each other . . .

Noam Chomsky: With common interests.

For example, take the people that Hochschild was studying on the bayou, who are environmentalists, committed environmentalists, no reason why they can't work together with environmentalists who say, "Look, let's get regulations that really work. Not just against your fishing, but against your chemical companies." That's a common basis. It happens that many of them regard the Bible as a much more authentic source of information than science, but that's not graven in stone either. That can be changed.

In fact, in the Evangelical community, there have been very progressive elements. Take the Central America solidarity movements. They were very significant. This is probably the first time in history that *in* the country that was responsible for the atrocities, individuals were going to help the victims. I don't think that's ever happened before. Nobody ever dreamt of going to a Vietnamese village to live with the villagers, to help them, to provide a white face, which is a little protection. It just never occurred to anyone. This happened with tens of thousands of people during the Central America solidarity period. Many of them were Evangelical.

I remember talking in Evangelical churches in the Midwest where people not only had direct experience, but knew more about what was going on than academics did. They were directly involved. For example, after the election in Nicaragua, the right-wing election, many of them stayed. Others gave up and left, but they stayed. There's plenty of opportunities. These are also Evangelical Christians.

Organize in churches, organize in communities. How did the Central America solidarity movements develop? People totally secular and Left like me were perfectly capable of working together with Evangelical Christians on concrete things, like helping communities protect themselves from criminal atrocities, state crimes, and so on.

Charlie Derber: This would partly mean hooking up with people, say, like Jim Wallis, an Evangelical leader who is organizing young Evangelicals to do that. Also, you're thinking also . . . I went down to the South during the civil rights movements. Are you imagining that some of this might be environmentalists who are now in colleges in the North, but would go back to their native South and would work there?

Noam Chomsky: Civil rights movements are a good example. There was real interaction, very constructive interaction between Northern college students and deeply impoverished repressed Black areas in the rural South. Helped each other, worked together, created bonds.

Charlie Derber: I experienced that. It was powerful. I slept on the floor of a Black family and lived in Jackson, Mississippi. You're saying, that's in a way a metaphor for what has . . .

Noam Chomsky: It can be done. There's no point arguing that it can't be done because the cultural differences are too great. Press forward as far as you can. My guess is one will find that the cultural differences, though they'll remain (why shouldn't they?) can be overcome by common concerns and interests.

Charlie Derber: Trump may end up simply crushing with brute repression many of the Left forces.

Noam Chomsky: I don't see any reason to expect real neo-fascism. Could happen, but I don't think the indications are strong.

We shouldn't be frightened of it. We should proceed with the opportunities we have which are considerable. Others can be brought in as well. The repressive forces themselves can be undermined. That's happened often. They have shared interests in many ways. If demonstrations and other activities are taken with an eye toward reaching out to those who are unsympathetic and bringing them in, I think a lot of progress can be made.

Charlie Derber: That's a hopeful. Nonetheless, given what Trump represents and particularly around climate issues and nuclear proliferation, do you feel there's an imperative that the progressive Left community, the public sensibility that you've described, needs to find some common ground to organize against Trump on these extinction issues?

Noam Chomsky: First of all, on climate, Trump is not all that different from the leadership of the Republican Party, or those in the primaries. Every single candidate either denied that climate change is happening or said we shouldn't do anything about it. Trump's position is maybe rhetorically more extreme, but not fundamentally different from the Party. That's a big educational and organizing opportunity for the Left. The United States is off the spectrum, global spectrum on this issue in some respects, which can be dealt with. Almost half the population thinks there can't be a climate change problem because of the Second Coming within a couple decades. That is not dealt with by demonstrations, but by sympathetic interactions.

Charlie Derber: I like the spirit of what you've been arguing, which is very invitational. I think what you're saying, contrary to Thomas Frank, for example, is that one can bridge a lot of these cultural differences. You don't want to go around labeling these people a cultural backwater.

Noam Chomsky: You don't come to people and say, "You're a cultural back-water." You deal with the fact that the beliefs that they have ought to be changed through their own recognition that these beliefs are not . . .

Charlie Derber: You don't mean their cultural values in terms of religion and that . . .

Noam Chomsky: Yes, I do.

Charlie Derber: You do?

Noam Chomsky: The belief, if the Bible and science conflict, that science is automatically wrong, people can come to see that's not true. Many people have. Much of the population has already passed through that change. Others can as well.

Charlie Derber: That seems like a struggle because when you get to people who are deeply into Biblical studies and Biblical beliefs . . .

Noam Chomsky: It's all of us, if we go back a couple generations, that's . . . If I go back to my grandfather, that was his belief. Things change.

Charlie Derber: That's an optimistic flavor in the analysis, because you're saying the progressive community should not be deterred in the way that Thomas Frank suggests.

Noam Chomsky: No. It should not be deterred and it shouldn't be contemptuous. It should be sympathetic, understanding, find common ground, things you can work on. Not put aside these questions of belief and understanding. They can be changed too.

Incidentally, just look at other possible common grounds. One major area is Trump's proposal for infrastructure development. The country needs that. It's needed it all along. These are actually Obama proposals which were blocked by the Republican Congress. The Republicans were a wrecking machine. Don't allow anything to work. One of the good things about their having control of the government is they might actually implement the policies instead of killing them. Here there are possible grounds for serious organizing and activism with the Trump backers and the workforce. These are jobs for them if it's done properly. A big "if." The vague indications about how to proceed from the Trump team are not encouraging, to put it mildly.

Charlie Derber: There are unions who worked their hearts out during this election. Michael Moore, he was writing a lot about this. They found their own members were voting for Trump for many of the reasons that we've talked about. What is your response to that?

Noam Chomsky: Labor union activists generally work hard and have achieved a great deal for union members and the rest of us. They now have to go back to their own unions. There's every reason to work with their members. There's a reason, after all, why they voted for Trump. No alternative was being presented to them. Present an alternative to them. Even Sanders didn't manage really to bridge the class issue. It should be done.

Charlie Derber: You've offered a very realistic but hopeful view of how to invite conversation and dialog and build connections to the whole country.

Noam Chomsky: Pursue the opportunities that exist. There are many of them. We don't know how far they can reach. There's no point mourning the bad things that happen. Find the things that can be done. Many of them with international connections, because there are similar problems. Many of them integrating people who seem to be on opposite sides of the divide, but really have common interests. Those could be extricated and pursued.

Charlie Derber: Wonderful. I feel very much in sympathy with the spirit of invitation and dialog and connection and unity. I think it's the way . . . it's at the heart of the progressive Left agenda in some way. We haven't done it very well very often, but it's consistent with our core values.

Noam Chomsky: That's what we should be pursuing.

Charlie Derber: That's what we should be doing. Thank you very much, Noam.

Noam Chomsky. Institute Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at MIT, is renowned globally as a critical public intellectual, political theorist, and activist. He is the leading critic of US foreign policy and has championed grass-roots movements against US militarized capitalism, American hegemony, corporate globalization, and authoritarian regimes around the world.

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